
Special Collector's Issue
Giallos
Italian Thriller Cinema
EUROPEAN
TRASH
CINEMA
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volume two number six



← Lucio Fulci's
New York Ripper

ETC

Daria Nicolodi
*in **Tenebrae** →*





Special Collector's Issue

Giallos

Italian Thriller Cinema

*Marie Chanette in Ernesto Gastaldi's **Libido** !*

*Dario Argento's **Deep Red** →*





*Delia Di Lazzaro in Flavio Mogherini's **Pyjama Girl Case** !*

european trash cinema

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THIS ISSUE



The cover of this issue is Italian thrillers!

The Cover Of This Issue
Could there be a more accurate example of the necessary staples found in Italian thrillers? Blood And dere Beauties This front cover shot from **Black Belly Of The Tarantula** says it all. See page 17 for the complete review. Regarding the back cover talented **Edwige Fenech** is the Queen of The Giallos her thrillers (especially the ones directed by Sergio Martino) are among the very best

EDITORIAL

This is an issue of ***ETC*** unlike any previous one There are no interviews, director filmographies nude photos of comely Italian starlets, letters page... none of the features you have come to expect Instead there's only me Over 30 000 words of me It's my version of the mini review trend You've seen it utilized by Chas Balun in his ***Deep Red*** and most recently in the debut issue of ***Asian Trash Cinema*** by Tom Weisser But here's where I differ I'm concentrating not only on one Country Italy– but one genre..the *thriller* or ***Giallo*** If not for my love of this type of film I doubt I could have finished in time (you try and watch over 100 films AND review them in 5 weeks!) Next issue will be back to normal as we explore the ***Cannibal World*** of Ruggero Deodato (through reviews interview and filmography) expose' Barbara Bouchet and hear what Riccardo Freda Luigi Cozzi and Lamberto Bava have to say

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT *ETC/ATC* publisher Tom Weisser has written the definitive book on Spaghetti Westerns! It's titled **Spaghetti Westerns, the Good the Bad & the Violent A Comprehensive, Illustrated Filmography of 600 Eurowesterns & Their Personnel** There are reviews for all 600+ films plus credits Along with a lengthy index you'll find complete filmographies by director composer screenplay writer actor Hell you name it! I had the honor of writing the Introduction and there is a Foreword by Tom Betts (***Westerns All'Italiana***) and Closing Comments by Bill Connolly (***Spaghetti Cinema***) Finally a book on the subject for the fans (and not necessarily academia) to enjoy It is scheduled as a Fall release contact McFarland & Co. at Box 611 Jefferson, NC 28640, (919) 246-4460

Craig

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The Color Of Fear:
GIALLO
compilation and reviews by Craig Ledbetter

INTRODUCTION

If you look up the term ***Giallo*** in an Italian language dictionary you'll see that it's the color yello. Applied to film however it means something all together different. Much like the term ***Film Noir***, derived from the black covers of the *Série Noir*, to indicate the hard-boiled detective novel in France, giallo has its origins in Italian literature. It was the lurid yellow covers of these Italian mystery novels that now designates a certain type of thriller film in Italy.

In this overview that I have prepared for ETC, I have not limited myself to what "experts" might define strictly as a Giallo. Not all the films listed herein contain a killer with black hat, gloves and overcoat wiping out members of the cast. What I have tried to include are films that contain a killer, at least one victim, and a mystery element to be solved. I'm sure some titles have escaped my notice so, as always, feel free to write in with corrections and additions.

Ok, what possessed me to undertake this project and why? For one thing **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE** was my introduction to the Italian horror film and it, along with **DEATH LAID AN EGG** (also reviewed in these pages) was responsible for my lifelong dementia for films of an Italian persuasion. Over the years I tried to view as many Italian horror films as possible, but growing up in Houston, Texas, it was strictly a hit or miss proposition. So few of these films ever played in a theater, that, were it not for Castle of Frankenstein and the odd issue of Famous Monsters, my mania for these films might have altogether died out.

Fortunately the invention of home video arrived. Yes, that much spat upon technology (especially by those who seem to only be able to enjoy a film when viewing it in a theater filled with drunks, drug addicts and people with bladder control problems) helped to re-introduce the films I saw as a youth and, more importantly, reveal here-to-fore unknown treasures that had never ever played this country. The early days of home video were a gold-mine for fans of Italo exploitation as the major movie companies had not yet decided to flood the market with their product. The Blockbuster video super stores had not yet destroyed the smaller outlets that carried hundreds of obscure titles instead of hundreds of the same film. Video labels would release anything because the marketplace supported variety.

Things change however and the U.S. video market began to reflect the same demographics as the theatrical one. Fewer and fewer films with bigger and bigger budgets resulting in less riskier projects. The video market will no longer even release Italian Horror films (in a carbon copy atmosphere of the theatrical one). Ironically, at time when Italian exploitation films feature U.S. actors exclusively, are filmed locally and are no longer even dubbed. In other words, they are now as shitty and bland as what's already being done here. It's a marker that has been completely abandoned in the U.S. except for mail order houses like **Video Search of Miami**.

On a project like this, there has to be a starting point for gathering the information so one can expand and bring it up to date. In the seventies, French film expert Alain Petit was covering what has finally caught hold over here some twenty years later. Thanks to Michael Secula who photocopied a French edition of the Warren Magazines ***Vampirella***, I had that starting point. Inside that issue nuked with French translations of the black and white horror comic was a filmography of Italian thrillers. It featured films from 1963 to 1973. Their credits and a short 3 to 4 sentence description. It was written by Petit and Jean-Marie Sabatier (the latter using the name "Jacques Cailloh").

It opened my eyes up to just what I had been and was still missing. It listed 62 films of

which at the time I had only seen 6. I knew at that then that I had a lot of catching up to do! So, I went about finding these films on video from England to Italy to Spain to Finland to well you get the idea. OK, I had spent all this time tracking them down, but at the same time I was also collecting thousands of other films in other genres.

I had all these thrillers yet I realized one day that I had only watched very few. At that time you begin to wonder why are you into all this. Is the chase truly more important more rewarding than sitting down and watching these films? No that's stupid. With a vehicle like ***ETC*** it seemed a pathetic waste to not detail what these films are who made them and why are they so popular? I can't answer the latter, but I knew I could handle the first two.

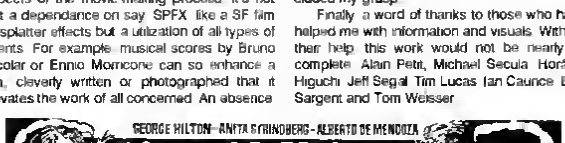
I had originally planned on writing an overview in this Introduction detailing trends recurring plot devices the movers and shakers of the genre at all, but quite frankly, it's all there in the reviews. So, rather than spoon feed you the information, I'll leave it for you to discover. I did learn that I still think of the Thriller as my favorite. How else could I have written so many reviews in such a short amount of time? I now have infinite respect for people like Chas. Balun and especially Tom Weisser who had to sit through all types of genres instead of being able to concentrate like I did on one they truly loved.

Why do I like these types of films so enjoyable? Probably because they utilize all aspects of the movie-making process. It's not just a dependance on say SPFX like a SF film or splatter effects but a utilization of all types of talents. For example, musical scores by Bruno Nicolai or Ennio Morricone can so enhance a film, cleverly written or photographed that it elevates the work of all concerned. An absence of gore and nudity usually spells disaster for exploitation films, yet a film like Umberto Lenzi's **SPASMO**, which lacks those elements overcomes it all with a brilliant script, direction, cinematography and musical score. It's just one of many examples you'll find in these films. If you really delve into the Italian film industry's history you will also discover the joys of spotting the people in front of and behind the camera. There is a consistent thread of actors and actresses that appear in this genre that, especially after watching over 100 of them, you'll learn to appreciate when they play against type.

Director-wise, Umberto Lenzi and Sergio Martino are the genre champions. Except for one misstep by Lenzi (**EYEBALL**), he and Martino consistently made stand out films. Especially Martino, who utilized actors (like Edwige Fenech and George Hilton), music (Bruno Nicolai), and cinematography (Giancarlo Ferrando), in ways that gave his films both style and substance. Argento is considered the maestro of the genre and it is he that has kept the genre alive all these years and is the one known by the fans today, but for a thriller with a story and bloody throat slashing effects my money is on Martino.

I have only covered the films I have seen up to this date. There are dozens more that I have not caught up with, and didn't have the space to delve into further. Rest assured that I will return to the subject in the future with reviews of films I have seen and credits for those that have eluded my grasp.

Finally, a word of thanks to those who have helped me with information and visuals. Without their help, this work would not be nearly as complete. Alain Petit, Michael Secula, Horacio Higuchi, Jeff Segal, Tim Lucas, Ian Caunce, Bob Sargent and Tom Weisser.



NOTES ON THE FOLLOWING TEXT

The entries are arranged chronologically and alphabetically (based on the original Italian title) within each year. The Italian titles are printed in bold, known English language titles are listed in caps directly beneath the Italian counterpart. For easier access to any film in the text, refer to the ***Contents*** *(English Language List of Giallos)* on page 6.

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1963 LA RAGAZZA CHE SAPEVA TROPPO
THE EVIL EYE
Director Mario Bava ***Sc*** Sergio Corbucci Ennio De Concini Elena de Sabata, Mario Bava, Franco Prosperi & Mino Guerrini ***Mus*** Roberto Nicolosi (Les Baxter US version) ***Cast*** Letícia Roman John Saxon Valentina Cortese

Rating ★★★

Comments Nora (Letícia Roman) arrives in Rome to visit her Aunt who isn't living well. When Auntie dies that night and Nora experiences a wild chain of events that lead to her witnessing a murder the police along with Dr Bass (John Saxon) are skeptical since there is no body. She ends up staying with friends of her Aunt's, Laura Craven (Valentina Cortese) and her husband. Nora also learns about a series of murders that took place over the past ten years dubbed The Alphabet Murders (the victims last names followed along like the letters of the alphabet). More murders occur before it is revealed that Laura herself is the killer (she also did in her sister) and it is not the heroic doctor who saves her but Laura's near to-death husband.

Considered the first true Giallo the U.S version contains some lame attempts at humor that knocks the rating down a ½ star. John Saxon makes for a lackluster leading man in this shy tribute to Alfred Hitchcock. The ending is priceless

1964 SEI DONNE PER L'ASSASSINO
BLOOD AND BLACK LACE

Director Mario Bava ***Sc*** Marcello Fondato Giuseppe Barilla Mario Bava ***Mus*** Carlo Rustichelli ***Cast*** Cameron Mitchell Eva Bartok, Harriet White Alan Collins (Luciano Pigozzi) Claudio Dantes

Rating ★★★½

Comments Isabella, a model at a swanky fashion salon, is murdered by a masked killer. When her diary is discovered by one of the other models she too is eliminated. One by one they die until the diary is finally destroyed. The killer is actually one people Max (Cameron Mitchell) and his rich lover the Countess (Eva Bartok). The diary contained the information that they killed the Countess' husband to get him out of their picture. As usual Max gets greedy and tries to bump off the Countess, but the plan fails as she survives a fall from the second floor of her villa and pumps several bullets into Max's gut. Argento can deny that Bava was a major influence (as he has done in more recent interviews) all he wants but one look at this film reminds one of what a huge debt he owes.

Even today the film amazes me with the cruelty shown during the murder sequences. Beautiful color photography helps usher in the bright xmas era that sets the genre apart from its German roots (ie. Film Noir). The gloved masked assassin makes its initial appearance and soon became the standard accoutrements for all future Italo-killers.

The environment of the film (fashion studio) would continue to appear viable well into the eighties

(OBSESSION A TASTE FOR FEAR NOTHING UNDERNEATH) Voice special of Paul Frees dubs at least a half dozen characters

1965 LIBIDO

Director Ernesto Gastaldi & Vittorio Salerno ***Sc*** Ernesto Gastaldi & Vittorio Salerno ***Music*** Carlo Rustichelli ***Cast*** Giancarlo Giannini Mara Mary Dominique Boschero Alan Collins

Rating ★★½

Comments As a boy Christian sees his father murder his mistress. Twenty years later he takes her new bride Helene back to the place where the murder took place. His lawyer Paul (Alan Collins) and his wife Sagitte (Mara Mary)—she also wrote the story the film is based on) accompany them. Christian (Giannini) becomes convinced that Paul is trying to drive him insane so that he can take control of the inheritance. Too late he discovers that actually Helene (Dominique Boschero) and Brigitte are the ones attempting to make him think he is insane.

Parts of this film turned up almost twenty years late in Gastaldi's & Salerno's **NOTTORNO CON GHIDA**. The footage was tinted and used in a completely different context. Stylish direction by Gastaldi & Salerno makes one wish they had done more work in that position, rather than concentrate on cranking out screenplays. Giancarlo Giannini was still a decade away from finding fame with Italian art houses fave director Lina Wertmüller yet even here he hams it up for the camera.

1967 IL DOLCE CORPO DI DEBORAH
THE SWEET BODY OF DEBORAH

Director Romolo Guerrieri ***Sc*** Ernesto Gastaldi ***Mus*** Nora Orlandi ***Cast*** Carroll Baker, Jean Sorel Evelyn Stewart (Ida Galli) Luigi Pistilli, George Hilton

Rating ★★★½

Comments Take a look at that cast. Besides being the first of many thrillers to star **BABY DOLL** Carroll Baker reads like a future Who's Who in the genre. Deborah (Carroll Baker) and Marcel (Jean Sorel) are on their honeymoon. Upon returning home to Geneva, they meet Philip (Luigi Pistilli) who accuses Marcel of causing his girlfriend's suicide (Evelyn Stewart). Into the story enters Robert (George Hilton) as an artist he photographs who will figure strongly in the film's many twists and turns.

I promised not to reveal anymore suffice to say this is one of Gastaldi's more brilliant story constructions. The historical precedent of George Hilton turning out to NOT be what he appears to be begins right here.

Director Guerrieri keeps a firm grip on the labyrinthine plot and does not fall prey to that dreaded desire by some directors of the times to go psychedelic. He directed one of the best Spaghetti Westerns **JOHNNY YUMA**, and the more recent SciFi film, **THE FINAL EXECUTIONER**.

LA MORTE HA FATTO L'UOVO
DEATH LAID AN EGG
aka PLUCKED aka A CURIOUS WAY TO LOVE

Director Giulio Questi ***Sc*** Giulio Questi, Franco Arcalli ***Mus*** Bruno Maderna ***Cast*** Jean Louis Trintignant, Gina Lollobrigida, Ewa Aulin Jean Sorel

Rating ★★★★

Comments Marco (Jean-Louis Trintignant) is a chicken breeder who is married to the strong willed Anne

(Gina Lollobrigida). When her niece Gabriela (Eva Aulin) comes to stay, Marco falls for her. They plot Anna's death but unbeknownst to Marco, Gabriela is secretly in love with Mondaini, who along with Gabriela, plans to murder both Marco and Anna. They succeed in knocking off Anna, but before they can set up Marco for the crime, he discovers the body and disposes of it. Unfortunately for Marco, he accidentally falls into the pulverizing machine. The police arrive, convinced that Gabriela and Mondaini (Jean Sobieski) have killed Marco and are set about to look for the body.

My favorite Euro-trash film ever. I have watched it dozens of times and have yet to ever tire of the many twists and turns served up by the film's labyrinthine plot. The cast has never been better, especially Tintignant who gives a performance that keeps you in the dark as to his true intentions.

Brilliantly directed and edited, this film's scare will drive you nuts (yet it's appropriate). No way any plot synopsis could ever do this film justice. This film was discussed in the book **CLUCK**, the reference work on chickens in the cinema.

NUDE...SI MUORE
THE YOUNG, THE EVIL AND THE SAVAGE
aka **SCHOOL GIRL KILLER**

Director Anthony M. Dawson (Antonio Margheriti). ***Sc*** Antonio Margheriti, Franco Solari. ***Mus*** Carlo Savina. ***Cast*** Michael Rennie, Mark Damon, Eleonor Brown, Alan Collins.

Rating ★★½

Comments. Students are being killed off at St. Hilda's, a finishing school for young girls. There are the usual suspects: a voyeuristic gardener (Alan Collins), fencing instructor De Brazzi, and young stud Richard (Mark Damon). Inspector Duran (Michael Rennie, in a performance that defines the term 'wooden') finds out that Lucille (Eleanor Brown) is about to inherit a fortune and uncovers the fact that her cousin, a man, had killed the school's newly appointed teacher. Miss Brown and Inspector nailed her as far as I got close enough to Lucille to put her out of the picture. That old standby of Euro-horror films, the lime pit, also makes an appearance. Rather tame for its time, my main problem with this film is the smirking performances by Mark Damon (something I've seen him do two many times in the past). You kind of hope he really is the killer just as they'll send his ass to jail. No such luck. Alan Collins (Luciano Pigozzi) is always referred to as the "Peter Lorre" of Italy. Whoever dubbed his voice in the English language version of Margheriti's **NR SUPER-INVISIBLE** must have felt the same way as it sounds just like him.

1968 **L'ASSASSINO HA LE MANE PULITE**
aka **OMICIDIO PER VOCAZIONE**
DEADLY INHERITANCE

Director Vittorio Sindoni. ***Sc*** Romano Migliorini, Vittorio Sindoni, Aldo Bruno. ***Mus*** Stelano Torossi. ***Cast*** Femi Benussi, Tom Drake, Veginio Gazzolo, Ernesto Colli, Jeanetta Lane.

Rating ★★

Comments Were it not for Femi Benussi's shower scene this snoker would rate one star. Old man Oscar is killed while working for the railroad company. His 3 daughters and idiot adopted son learn that at Oscar had a sizeable fortune. The catch is that until Janet (the idiot son) reaches 21 (he is currently 18) they get nada. Daughter number one, Simone (Femi Benussi) is having an affair with Jules, the owner of a club that plays bad imitation rock music. Rosalie (Jeanette Lane) is married to a loud mouth asshole named Leon. Colette, the youngest, is pretty much the typical airheaded blonde. Before you know it, people start getting killed left and right. First Janet, then Rosalie, her Israeli husband Leon and finally Colette (inspector Gerard (Tom Drake) has his hands full try to figure out who the killer is. In true plot twist fashion, it turns out that Janet was the mastermind behind it all. He stole Oscar's body and used it to fake his death. He then went after the rest of the cast until only Simone was left. He needed her alive to get the money (after which he intended to kill her). As a last minute kicker we see that Janet's helper in all this was Lt. Gerard. Simone ends up killing him (Janet was offed by another cop) and walks off into the sunset.

Fast forward buttons were made for films like this! What is the star of **THE CYCLOPS, HOUSE OF BLACK DEATH**, and **THE SPECTRE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE**, Tom Drake, doing in this? From the looks of it, trying to make enough for that next bottle of hooch. Tom, did you get that toupee from Paul Naschy or did something ate on top of your head? I will give Ernesto Colli high marks for playing the creepy Janet. Fortunately looking like a cretin helps sell the performance. And what is composer Silvano Spadaccini (**SLAUGHTER HOTEL**) doing playing a hysterical truck driver?

LA MORTE NON HA SESSO
DEATH HAS NO SEX aka A BLACK VEIL FOR LISA

Director Massimo Dallamano. ***Sc*** Massimo Dallamano, Petrilli & Belli. ***Mus.*** Giovanni Fusco. ***Cast.*** John Mills, Luciana Paluzzi, Robert Hoffmann.

Rating ★★½

Comments. John Mills plays an insanely jealous husband who is a detective involved in the Narcotics division. Lorraine Paluzzi is his beautiful wife Lisa with a criminal past and a predilection for screwing around on her husband. In steps handsome Robert Hoffmann as a hit-man who is hired by Mills to kill off Paluzzi. Hoffmann ends up falling in love with Lisa and conspiring with her to double-cross Mills. It all ends with Lisa in "mourning" for both Hoffmann and Mills. A disappointment coming from director Dallamano, he would go on to do much better work in the genre. He got his start photographing the early Westerns of Sergio Leone (under the name Jack Dalmas). This film is more like a TV police melodrama than a stylish thriller. The score by Giovanni Fusco doesn't help either as it sounds like something Lalo Schifrin might concoct. Although Mills, Paluzzi and Hoffmann dub their own voices, Veteran voice-maestro Paul Frees is heard

as the voice of at least 6 different characters (much like the work he performed in Bava c **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE**) Painzzi was much better in 1968 c **THE GREEN SLIME**

ORGASMO
PARANOIA
Director Umberto Lenzi. ***Sc*** Umberto Lenzi, Ugo Moretti, Mario-Clare Solfanelli. ***Mus*** Piero Umiliani. ***Cast*** Carroll Baker, Lou Castel, Colette Descombes

Rating ★★
Comments Don't confuse this title with **PARANOIA** a later Lenzi thriller that played here as **A QUIET PLACE TO KILL**. This was one of the first X rated films I saw as a young lad it was so rated because of the many nude shots of the two female leads At the time, that was enough for me These days, I find the film severely lacking in many categories in a plot that found its way into many other Lenzi films aging Carroll Baker becomes infatuated with a younger man, only to have the affair eventually turn into her worst nightmare.

1969 **A DOPPIA FACCIA**
DOUBLE FACE
Director Riccardo Freda. ***Sc*** Remano Migliorini, Giovanbattista Mussetto, Lucio Fulci Riccardo Freda. ***Music*** Joan Christian. ***Cast*** Klaus Kinski Margaret Lee Khetiane Kruger Sidney Chaplin.

Rating ★★½
Comments Tangentially based on Edgar Wallace s story *The Face in the Night*, **DOUBLE FACE** is a victim of the times it was made in Late of bad sixties rock music and dizzying camera work this has to be one of Freda s weakest films The version out here on Unicorn video is missing all the nudity that makes this boring affair the least bit tolerable.

The film revolves around Klaus s quest to discover if his wife is really dead One of this film s screenwriters (Lucio Fulci) made a much better version of the plot-line the same year (**ONE ON TOP OF THE OTHER**)



Riccardo Freda's ***Double Face*** *(aka* ***LIZ & HELEN*** *[French Release title])*

COSÌ DOLCE, COSÌ PERVERSA
SO SWEET, SO PERVERSE
Director Umberto Lenzi ***Sc*** Ernesto Gastaldi Massimo D Avack. ***Mus*** Riz Ortolani. ***Cast*** Jean-Louis Trintignant, Erika Blanc, Carroll Baker Horst Frank, Helga Liné.

Rating ★★½
Comments Here s another thriller where you almost need a scorecard to keep track of who s double-crossing who. Erika Blanc plays J L T s lesbian wife while Carroll Baker may be her or J L T s lover Every one (including Horst Frank) is plotting to kill each other off and the only reason to stick around till the end is to see who is left standing. Helga Liné has a nice cameo as a rich man s wife also attracted to both sexes Nothing special

IL ROSSO SEGNO DELLA FOLLIA
HATCHET FOR A HONEYMOON
Director Mario Bava. ***Sc*** Mario Bava, Santiago Moncada, Mario Musoy. ***Mus*** Sante Romitelli. ***Cast*** Stephen Forsyth, Laura Betti Femi Benussi, Alan Collins Dagmar Lassander

Rating ★★½
Comments The plot of this film (like so many psychological horror films) owes a lot to **PSYCHO**. Forsyth kills women in wedding attire and with each murder, his recurring vision from childhood of who killed his mother becomes clearer. You'd have to be brain dead to not realize who that murderer is The rating was docked a half-n-star once the only version I've seen is the TV version out here on video. A great cast is somewhat wasted on the exploration of the hell of a bad marriage. Laura Betti's performance as the wife is like listening to someone drag their fingernails across a blackboard (for another Betti Bitch performance see Sergio Corbucci's **BANDERA BANDITS**) You certainly can't sympathize with Forsyth's character no matter how tortured. I mean, he killed off Femi Benussi, for Chrissakes!

L'UCCELLO DALLE PIUME DI CRISTALLO
THE BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE
Director Dario Argento. ***Sc*** Dario Argento ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast*** Tony Musante, Suzy Kendall Eva Renzi, Enrico Maria Salerno Mario Adorf.

Rating ★★★
Comments Artist Tony Musante witnesses a murder and spends the balance of the film trying to remember a crucial detail that would reveal the killer's true identity. This plot device would become a common thread in Argento's work up to and including **OPERA**. Over the years he would

ehit he focus towards female characters. Much like the fact that there are no bad Sergio Leone westerns, the same holds true for Argento's giallos. This effect was more plot-driven than his later works and is all the stronger for it.

His next film **IL GATTO A NOVE CODE (CAT O' NINE TAILS)** would actually suffer from trying to cram too many ideas into one film. The scores by Ennio Morricone to the first three Argento films makes the later scores filled with flavor of the-month Heavy Metal shit all the more regrettable. Mario Adorf as the cat-eating artist steals (and steps) the film.

UNA SULL ALTRA
ONE ON TOP OF THE OTHER
Director Lucio Fulci ***Sc*** Lucio Fulci, Roberto Gianviti, Jose Luis Martinez Molla ***Mus.*** Riz Ortolani
Cast Jean Sorel, Marise Mell, Elsa Martinelli, Alberto De Mendoza, Jean Sobieski, John Ireland, Faith Domergue, Jorge Rigaud
Rating ★★★½
Comments Sorel's wife (Mell) is found dead and the police suspect that he poisoned her. He is sentenced to die in the gas chamber for the crime. It is up to his mistress (Martinelli) and best friend (Sobieski) to collect the evidence to free him in time. A strong plot-driven thriller in the Hitchcock tradition (and one that has been completely abandoned in these gore-soaked times) that is a joy to try and outguess. Sorel is especially impressive in a role that, at first, one has little sympathy for. As the film proceeds, Sorel is able to elicit concern for his future as that by film's end, you really hope he doesn't get executed by the State. Marise Mell has rarely been better in a dual role that showcases two different personas. The nude scenes ain't bad, either.



Spanish print advertisement for Bava's 5 Dolls For An August Moon

1970 **CINQUE BAMBOLE PER LA LUNA D'AGOSTO**
5 DOLLS FOR AN AUGUST MOON
Director Mario Bava. ***Sc*** Mario Di Nardo. ***Mus*** Piero Umiliani. ***Cast*** William Berger, Ira Furstenberg, Edwige Fenech, Howard Ross (Renato Rossini)
Rating ★★★ DAMMIT!
Comments Here's a film that gets no respect. It is usually singled out as Bava's worst film. Not so. It may reveal a lazy technician (too many zooms), but a talented one none the less. The cast is a dream come true for giallo fans as many here went on to spectacular in the genre. Emilio "Farrell (William Berger), along with several others, is a guest at George's island retreat. The prof has developed a synthetic resin that George and other industrialists would like to get their hands on. Numerous people die that weekend in vain attempts to gain access to the formula. Even the professor has a skeleton in his closet, for which he ends up going to prison.

A variation on Agatha Christie's **TEN LITTLE INDIANS**, the film's main highlights include the bodies wrapped in plastic bags and stored in the walk-in freezer, George's quick appearance in a golden devil mask, and a child fascination of murders being dumped across the floor. Certainly one of the least atmospheric of all Bava films, it helps to keep things light and breezy. And I love that kitschy score by Piero Umiliani!

CONCERTO PER PISTOLA SOLISTA
THE WEEKEND MURDERS
Director Michele Lupo. ***Sc*** Sergio Donati. ***Mus*** Francesco De Masi. ***Cast*** Anne Heywood, Lance Percival, Gastone Moschin, Evelyn Stewart, Giacomo Rossi-Stuart, Orchidea De Santis
Rating ★★★
Comments The closest the Italians ever got to a straight Agatha Christie type mystery thriller was this delightful film. A large family is called together for the reading of the Patriarch's will.

They are all disgusted to find everything is left to favored daughter Mollie. Before long the cast begins to shrink as a maniac has devised numerous methods to pare down the potential family survivors. Lance Percival, as the stuffy and cliche Scotland Yard detective, along with local hobby Gastone Moschin, who, while brighter gets no respect from anyone, steal the film with their Monty Python-type humor. Evelyn Stewart once again gets knocked off well before the film's end. Orchidea de Santis is ravishing as the maid who drives the male cast to distraction. Francesco De Masi's main theme (bombastically played on piano) is the origins for the off-the-wall original Italian title. Who's the killer? Why Mollie of course. It seems there was a letter will that wrote her out of the inheritance entirely and so she was in need to kill the remaining family members in case the new document was found.

ECOLOGIA DEL DELITTO
BAY OF BLOOD, aka TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE
Director Mario Bava. ***Sc*** Mario Bava, Giuseppe Zaccariello, Filippa Ottoni. ***Mus*** Stelvio Cipriani. ***Cast*** Luigi Pistilli, Claudine Auger, Claudio Volonte

Laura Betti Chris Avram, Brigitte Skay

Rating ★★★

Comments Owner of a boyfriend property the Countess is killed by her no-good husband. He in turn is killed, throwing ownership of the area up for grabs. The Count's daughter Renata (Claudine Auger) and her husband Albert (Luigi Pistilli) arrive and the squabbles begin. Slasher fodder is provided when Brunhilda (Brigitte Skay) and her hippie friends decide to spend the night in an abandoned cottage. Before they are killed, we are treated to Skay's totally gratuitous nude swim. The plot really gets complicated as the film flashes back and forth to reveal the fact that several different murderers were at work. However Renata and Albert are the main culprits and after wiping out everyone they are greeted with twin shotgun blasts from their prepubescent kids who compliment them for doing such good corpses.

The only meaning this film has for goresounds today is the fact that **FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 2** ripped off most of the more stylish murders for its setpieces. A shame really as the film reveals the prankster side of Bava. It had to be a perverse mind to setup that wonderful ending. The opening double murder sequence her really been topped. Much like Howard Ross, Chris Avram has made a career out of playing scumbags.

IL GATTO A NOVE CODE

THE CAT O NINE TAILS

Director Dario Argento. *Sc* Dardano Sacchetti & Dario Argento. *Mus* Ennio Morricone. *Cast* James Franciscus, Karl Malden, Catherine Spaak, Reda Rasimov, Horst Frank, Werner Peehath

Rating ★★★

Comments Sightless Karl Malden and his young ward team-up with reporter James Franciscus to uncover the maniac killer working behind the scenes at a bio-chemical scientific research facility.

They discover that there are nine clues and nine suspects. After one of the scientists mistresses is killed, they raid her tomb and find a piece of paper which incriminates one of the young scientists revealing he possesses a set of damaged chromosomes indicating he has homicidal tendencies. The acting in this film is among the best to appear in an Argento film. Malden and Franciscus make a likeable duo. There's far too much talk for my liking, still no better than **PHENOMENA**. The nude love scene between Spaak and Franciscus is as un-erotic as these things can get.

LA MORTE RISALE A IERI SERA

DEATH OCCURRED LAST NIGHT

Director Duccio Tessari. *Sc* Duccio Tessari, Biagio Proietta, Antony Brenner. *Mus* Gianni Ferrio. *Cast* Raf Vallone, Frank Wolff, Gabriele Tinti, Beryl Cunningham, Eva Renzi.

Rating ★★★

Comments Raf Vallone gives a strong performance as a father tracking down his daughter's killers. He kept her locked up in their apartment because she was mentally retarded. Unfortunately she had a curiosity about sex and was soon kidnapped by a local pimp. She was killed when her mental condition was discovered. Frank Wolff (who never gave a poor performance in any of his films) plays a cop who is also trying to locate the murderers before Vallone. Raf tracks them down and brutally kills them. Tessari is one of the better *hilo-genre* directors. He usually specialized in Westerns (the *Ringo* films with Giuliano Gemma) though his two thrillers (see also **UNA FARFALLA CON LE ALI INSANGUINATE (BLOOD STAINED BUTTERFLY)**) show he could have just as easily specialized in them. Gianni Ferrio scores as one of the best. Black actress Beryl Cunningham made numerous appearances throughout the sixties and seventies, most notably starring in two films by Piero **(SATANIK)** Vivarelli, **BLACK DECAMERON & IL DIO SERPENTE**. And of course Frank Wolff's character has to be suffering from some type of misery (here it's sinus problems) in an effort to humanize him. Unhappiness, obsession and loneliness are the themes that stand out in this thoughtful variation.

NELLE PIEGHE DELLA CARNE

THE FOLDS OF THE FLESH

Director Sergio Bergonzelli. *Sc* Sergio Bergonzelli, Mario Caiano, De Agostini. *Mus* Jesus Villa Rojo. *Cast* Anna Maria Pierangeli, Eleonora Rossi Drago, Fernando Sancho.

Rating ★★★

Comments When watching this one you'll have to take notes to figure out what the Hell is going on. It's totally confusing and engrossing at the same time, there are enough sleazy goings on to get you over the rough (*ie* boring) spots. There are flesh-eating vultures. Incestuous relationships, a crude beheading and more. The film's low point is reached when we get to see Fernando Sancho take a bath! The man should NEVER appear nude on film. It gives new meaning to the title, *Folds Of The Flesh*.

PAHANOIA

A QUIET PLACE TO KILL

Director Umberto Lenzi. *Sc* Rafael Marchent, Marcello Gescia, Bruno Di Geronimo, Marie-Claire Solleville. *Mus* Gregory Darsa Segure. *Cast* Carroll Baker, Jean Sorel, Luis Davila, Alberto Dalbes, Marina Coffa, Anna Proklemer

Rating ★★½

Comments Helen (Carroll Baker) receives word from her ex-husband Maurice (Jean Sorel) is join him at his villa in Majorca, Spain. When she arrives she finds out that it was actually Constance (Marina Coffa) who summoned her. It seems she knows that Helen attempted to kill Maurice when they were married and she wants to enlist Baker's help in knocking him off again. The tables turn on Constance when during the attempt, it is she that is killed instead. Constance's daughter Susan (Anna Proclemer) arrives to discover her mother's fate and instantly suspects Helen and Maurice of foul play. The joke turns out to be on Helen as Maurice and Susan are actually lovers and it was they who planned Constance's and now her death (in a car wash). Just when these two think they have pulled

it all off, Constance's body (wrapped in chains and tied to an anchor) is found. The film is all plot as their is no nudity or violence to be found here. The countryside is presented in documentary fashion as we follow the characters from beach to pool. The problem is that nothing much happens in between these wanderings. If there were a bumbling detective around you'd swear you were watching an episode of TV's **Columbo**

LO STRANO VIZIO DELLA SIGNORA WARDH
BLADE OF THE RIPPER aka NEXT

Director Sergio Martino. ***Sc*** Eduardo Finchera, Ernesto Gastaldi. ***Mus*** Bruno Nicolai ***Cast*** Edwige Fenech, George Hilton, Ivan Rassimov, Alberto De Mendoza

Rating ★★★½

Comments You can't go wrong with a Sergio Martino thriller. None of his films in this genre rate less than 3 and ½ stars. Fenech makes a stunning debut as the victim at a plot to drive her mad. Alberto De Mendoza plays a good guy here, but he can play the flip-side as well (see **UN SULL ALTRA [ONE ON TOP OF THE OTHER]**). Ivan Rassimov's features (much like Gordon Mitchell) type him as the person of all-medial and Martino uses that fact to full effect here. Finally, after you watch enough of these films you learn to ALWAYS suspect that George Hilton will be revealed as the killer.

IL TUO DOLCE CORPO DA UCCIDERE
(no known English Language title)

Director Alfonso Brescia. ***Sc*** Antonio Fos. ***Mus*** Carlo Savina. ***Cast*** Giorgio Ardisson, Francoise Prevost, Orchidea de Santis, Eduardo Fajardo.

Rating ★

Comments You know you're in trouble when you see who the director is. I think Brescia could fuck up a wet dream. This film is a cross between a bonbe line thriller and **SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY** (a match made in Hell, I know). Clive (Giorgio Ardisson) is a role better suited for Terry Thomas) fantasizes about ways of torturing and killing his shrewish bitch of a wife. She instructs him on every facet of his life and he has had enough. He knows she is having an affair with their physician Franz (Eduardo Fajardo) so he gets some dirt on the good doctor and bribes him into killing Diana (Francoise Prevost). Franz cuts her up and puts the parts into two suitcases that Clive takes with him on a business trip to Tangier. There he plans on disposing of the suitcases and be rid of Diana, once and for all. Unfortunately for the viewers, a lame comedy device is introduced with one of the suitcases being accidentally switched with Eleonora (Orchidea de Santis) a girl he met on the plane. The balance of the film is spent with Clive trying to get the suitcase back without alerting the local police, who are watching his every move to see what he's up to. In rapid fashion we learn Clive accidentally kill a policeman, discover his wife is not really dead (she and the doctor were in on it from the start) and get arrested for the former incident. The film ends with the Fajardo character listening to Diana belt out an endless stream of instructions as he contemplates actually dismembering and stuffing her in three luggage bags.

L'UOMO DAGLI OCCHI DI OHIACCIO
THE MAN WITH THE ICY EYES

Director Alberto De Martino. ***Sc*** Massimo De Rita, Arduino Maiuri, Vincenzo Mannino, Alberto De Martino, Adriano Bolzoni. ***Mus.*** Peppino De Luca. ***Cast*** Antonio Sabato, Victor Buono, Barbara Bouchet, Keenan Wynn, Faith Demergue, Corrado Gaipa

Rating ★★★

Comments Here is a thriller that should please the assassination conspiracy buffs out there. Senator Robertson has been killed at his front door step. A reporter for the Hammond Sentinel, named Mills (Antonio Sabato) is assigned to write a personality piece on the dead man. An ex-convict named Valdez (Corrado Gaipa) is the most likely suspect and with Mills help in uncovering evidence he is arrested. When Mills later discovers that Valdez may have been framed he makes an all out effort to find out who the real killer is. *The Man With The Icy Eyes* (which is how the killer was described) is actually a person in the government who has his "eyes" on bettering his position.

The film was shot in New Mexico and De Martino uses the stark desolate countryside to emphasize the moral vacancy needed to pull off such a heinous crime. I know. I lived there for two LONG years. The cast is filled with Hollywood veterans from Wynn to Buono (who is dubbed woefully inept by a constipated actor) to Howard Hughes ex-mistress, Faith Demergue. An excellent musical score by Peppino De Luca makes me wonder why he wasn't more prolific.

1971 **LA BESTIA UCCIDE A SANGUE FREDDO**
SLAUGHTER HOTEL

Director Fernando Di Leo. ***Sc*** Fernando Di Leo, Nino Latino. ***Mus*** Silvano Spadaccino. ***Cast*** Klaus Kinski, Margaret Lee, Rosalba Neri, Monica Strebel, John Karlsen.

Rating ★★★½ a True Guilty Pleasure!!

Comments I love this thoroughly unredeeming film. It's all over the place as it veers from a gothic-styled chiller to pure sexploitation to an ending that rallows the times fascination with violence (in the American advertising for the film tried to capitalize on killer Richard Speck's mass murder of eight nurses). Di Leo made his name scripting some of the better examples of the Spaghetti Western field (**NAVAJO JOE**, **MASSACRE TIME**). From there he moved on to make his name in Crime Films (**BOSS**, **MILAN CALIBER 9**). His brief flirtation with the Horror genre makes me regret he didn't try his hand at more. They may have not been any good, but I'm sure they would have been trashy fun. Kinski stars as a doctor at the local sanitarium, trying to cure his female clientele whilst a murderer is lowering their number. Although Margaret Lee has the female lead (and like every other female in the cast, a number of nude scenes), it is Rosalba Neri, as a nymphomaniac, who steals the show. The US release is longer than many others in

circulation, however a French Video version has graphic female masturbation sequences crudely inserted (oops, sorry about that) throughout.

LA CODA DELLO SCORPIONE
THE TAIL OF THE SCORPION
Director Sergio Martino ***Sc*** Ernesto Gastaldi Eduardo Brochiero, Sauro Scavolini. ***Mus.*** Bruno Nicolai. ***Cast*** George Hilton, Anita Strindberg Evelyn Stewart, Janine Reynaud, Luigi Pistilli, Albert De Mendoza, Luis Barbeo.
Rating ★★★☆
Comments If I had access to an English language print of the film, I can almost assure you the rating would be 4 stars. In a sly nod to **PSYCHO** Sergio Martino knocks off would be heroine Evelyn Stewart a quarter of the way into the film. Anita Strindberg enters and spends the balance of the film trying to figure out who is attempting to have her join Stewart's fate (remember George Hilton is in the cast.) Janine Reynaud and Luis Barbee (two vet srams of Jesus Franco films) are a deadly duo who turn out to be red herrings. The title comes from the elaborate super hero like clothing worn by the killer.



Euro ad-mat for Sergio Martino's Tail Of The Scorpion

COSA AVETE FATTO A SOLANGE?
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO SOLANGE?
Director Massimo Dallamano ***Sc*** Massimo Dallamano Bruno Di Geronimo. ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone ***Cast*** Fabio Testi, Christina Galbó Karin Baal, Joachim Fuchsberger Camille Keaton.
Rating ★★★★
Comments Fabio Testi is a womanizing professor who enjoys the sexual favors of his female students When they start turning up dead, he is the main suspect. The killer turns out to be the straight father of the titled character who takes revenge on her promiscuous friends. It seems she had an abortion and because of the trauma involved with the operation, has since become a vegetable

A really wonderful film filled with all the elements that go into a successful thriller. The appearance of Joachim Fuchsberger as a police inspector is about the only hint that this film was based on the Edgar Wallace novel, *The Secret of the Green Pin* (Fuchsberger was a mainstay of the German series in the series) Obviously the Italian giallo had replaced the once prolific *Krimis*. Testi has always been a mostly wooden leading man but here he gets a chance to do some acting. He starts off as an unlikable character who truly learns to appreciate his neglected wife during the tragedy that takes place around him. Rarely do we see a character mature before our very eyes. Camille Keaton does NOT impress in her role as Solange (a fact true of all her European work) Joe D'Amato (Aristide Massaccesi) contributes some excellent cinematography and even cameos as a policeman.

IL DIAVOLO A SETTE FACCE
THE DEVIL HAS 7 FACES
Director Osvaldo Civirani ***Sc*** Osvaldo Civirani, Tito Carpi ***Mus*** Stelvio Cipriani. ***Cast*** Carroll Baker, George Hilton, Stephen Boyd, Lucretia Love Alan Collins
Rating ★
Comments What a waste of a good cast! Don't let the principals involved fool you, the is really nothing more than a melodrama involving a robbery and the double-crosses involved after the fact. The only redeeming feature of this film is the score by Cipriani. I've yet to see a film by Civirani that I liked (he usually edits and his brother photographs)

I DUE VOLTI DI PAURA
(no known English language title)
Director Tullio Demichelli ***Sc*** Paolo Herrera, Mario Di Nardo ***Mus*** Franco Micalizzi ***Cast*** George Hilton, Luciana Paluzzi Fernando Rey Anita Strindberg Luis Davila, Eduardo Fajardo.
Rating ★★☆
Comments Murder in the medical profession is the mileu for a change of pace with this thriller. When Dr Azzini is killed suspicion quickly falls on four of his colleagues. As usual for this genre all the male and female characters have either had or are currently having affairs with one another. The Italians love their sexual politics confused. If you're wondering who the killer is, need I remind you who the star of this film is?!

L'ETRUSCO UCCIDE ANCORA
THE ETRUSCAN KILLS AGAIN
aka THE DEAD ARE ALIVE
Director Armando Crispino ***Sc*** Armando Crispino, Lucio Battistrada. ***Mus.*** Riz Ortolani ***Cast*** Alex Cord Samantha Eggar Horst Frank John Marley
Rating ★☆
Comments Compared to Crispino a **AUTOPSY** this film is quite a come down. Everything about this film reeks of deception, beginning with the title (there is no Etruscan-like zombie doing the killing; only one of the members of the cast) and carrying on to the film a denouement. Alex Cord and Samantha Eggar do not make for a very photogenic couple both obviously wanting to be somewhere else. Only Horst Frank survives with his performance intact. He has always struck me as representing the banality of evil.

UNA FARFALLA CON LE ALI INSANGUINATE
THE BLOOD STAINED BUTTERFLY

Director Duccio Tessari ***Sc*** Gianfranco Clerici Duccio Tessari ***Mus*** Gianni Ferrio ***Cast*** Helmut Berger Evelyn Stewart, Carole Andre Silvano Tranquilli

Rating ★★★½

Comments If not for the overwrought performance by Helmut Berger this one would have easily been rated ★★★★ It is that good A young girl has her throat slashed in a wooded area during a heavy downpour Though the killer escapes there are quite a few witnesses who think they can identify him. Detailed crime scene analysis along with the eye-witness testimony pegs the murderer as a sportscaster named Alessandro Unfortunately for him, his wife (Evelyn Stewart) and lawyer are having an affair and are using the trial to get Alessandro out of the picture He is found guilty and given life imprisonment. However the murders continue to occur in the same wooded area. This plus new evidence, causes Alessandro to be released. It turns out that the first victim was the girlfriend of piano virtuoso Giorgio (Helmut Berger) When he discovered that Alessandro really did kill the girl he committed two murders just as the sportscaster would be released and he could shoot him down in cold blood

In gathering the data for the project, it was rewarding to discover certain behind the scenes personnel who have been overlooked in the past. Screenplay writer Gianfranco Clerici a man claim to fame (or infamy) was as the screenplay writer for Deodato's **CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST** In fact, he (along with Ernesto Gastaldi) can lay claim to the best telling in the Giallo salt mines The structure of the film moving both the present and the past is brilliant. Director Tessari also goes into great detail about the actual procedures used by crime labs and the technicians involved doing the work. Gianni Fanton use of Tchaikovsky s Thematic Concerto #1 for piano emphasizes Giorgio s torment and descent into madness. Interestingly Francesco De Masi used the same piece of music (for some effect) in **THE WEEKEND MURDERS** Silvano Tranquilli plays the harried police inspector who spends the entire film trying to get a decent cup of coffee Much more could be written about this gem.

GIORNATA NERA PER L'ARIETE
THE FIFTH CORD nka EVIL FINGERS

Director Luigi Bazzoni ***Sc*** Mario Di Nardo, Luigi Bazzoni Mario Fanelli ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone ***Cast*** Franco Nero, Silvia Monti, Pamela Tiffin Ira Fronstenberg Wolfgang Preiss Edmund Purdom.

Rating ★★★☆

Comments Here s one that will keep you guessing up to the very end The opening shot of a deranged voice coming over a phone line foreshadows the beginning sequence in **TENEBRAE** Franco Nero (who gets to dub his own voice) is an alcoholic newspaperman, Andrea Bild who finds himself implicated in a murder plot John Lintbeck is attacked after walking home with his ex-girlfriend Isabel Andrea is discouraged by the police and Dr Bini from probing too deep into the attack Dr Bini s wife is killed after Andrea interviews her thus throwing suspicion onto the reporter Next to die are Andrea s boss Lubbock s girlfriend and one of the witnesses (Julie) to the original beating The ending reveals that John is the murderer He was beaten up by Julie's father because John was blackmailing the old man over the fact that she appeared in live sex shows (acting by Dr Bini (Wolfgang Preiss) for his rich clients) While recovering from the battering John decided to kill his philandering girlfriend, Isabel. The other killings were done to incriminate Andrea. Andrea uses astrology (?) to uncover the real murderer

Wolfgang Preiss is especially good as a physician (No NOT Dr Mabuse) who is almost as spooky as the real murderer Filmmaker Luigi Bazzoni is a talented yet quirky director His films always look impeccable (Cinematography here is by future Oscar winner for Coppola s **THE GODFATHER**, Vittorio Storaro) but don't always connect (see his **LE ORME** available in the USA from Force Video as **PRIMAL IMPULSE**)

L'IGUANA DALLA LINGUA DI FUOCO
THE IGUANA WITH A TONGUE OF FIRE

Director Willy Pareto (Riccardo Freda) ***Sc*** Riccardo Freda, Sandro Continenza ***Mus*** Stelvio Cipriani, ***Cast*** Luigi Pistilli Dagmar Lassander, Anton Diffring Valentina Cortese, Dominique Boschero, Werner Pochath.

Rating ★★★

Comments Director Freda may not think much of this film but I happen to rate it rather highly It takes place in Ireland (and star Luigi Pistilli is dubbed with a very appropriate Irish brogue) and the film s exteriors do a nice job of highlighting it. There are graphic murder sequences involving a nasty slit throat and disfigurement with acid (both spotlighted in grisly closeups) Luigi Pistilli gets to shine in a leading man role that he rarely get to play He even gets to roll around in the sheets with Dagmar Lassander To see the old and haggard looking Lassander in Fulci's **HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY** after viewing her youthful appearance here you realize she must have lived a rather decadenced life in between. Stelvio Cipriani s score really adds to the film s ambiance

The plot revolves around Ambassador Sobieski (Anton Diffring) and his family Associates of his begin turning up dead (like his lovers driver friends etc) and it s up to Inspector Norton (Pistilli) to sort out the guilty party As it turns out Sobieski s hunchbacked son (played by Werner Pochath) is the killer but we also learn that Sobieski took advantage of the situation to kill a venal mistress (Dominique Boschero) Of course, the fake dummy makes an appearance at film s end!

UNA LUCERTOLA CON LA PELLE DI DONNA
A LIZARD IN A WOMAN'S SKIN

Director Lucio Fulci ***Sc*** Lucio Fulci ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast*** Florinda Bolkan Stanley Baker, Jean Sorel, Alcides De Mendoza, Anita Strindberg Jorge Rigaud, Leo Genn

Rating ★★★

European print advertisement for Lucio Fulci's Lizard In A Woman s Skin



Comments: Carol Hammond (Florinda Bolkan) tells her psych-shrink about her dream of murdering her next door neighbor Julia (Anita Strindberg). When the neighbor turns up dead and Carol s fur coat and dagger are found near the body Inspector Corvin (Stanley Baker) arrests her Her husband (Jean Sorel) and father (Leo Genn) are both lawyers and raise their case on the testimony of Carol s psy chiatrist (Jorge Rigaud) Dr Kerr It allows her to be released on bail where she is soon menaced by a red-haired hippie that also appeared in her dream. More deaths occur (including Carol s step-daughter and father) before it is revealed that Carol did kill the neighbor because she was going to go to Mr Hammond and inform him of their lesbian affair. Stanley Baker s role as Corvin redefines the term "wooden performance" with his appearance in this one. Geez, what a stiff!

Mostly known for its infamous dog "evisceration" scene by Carlo Rambaldi, the film features Fulci a truly paranoiac vision of how the Sixties genere ben screwed up. His laughably unenlightened view of wher constitutes a bad LSD tr p is comparable to **REEFER MADNESS** during the thirties. There are a lot of h ghlights anyway including another fine score by Morricone and s uperstive performances by Florinda Bolkan as the murderess Anita Strindberg as the lesbian/murder victim shows her adept at playing sluts bitches saints mur deress at victim. Fulci s sh rring moments as a director come during the dream sequences They are quite effective Unfortunately much is cut for the American version (get the Euro version...mail order)

MIO CARO ASSASSINO
MY DEAR ASSASSIN

Director Tonino Valeri ***Sc*** Franco Bucceri, Roberto Leoni, Tonino Valeri, Jose Maesso ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone ***Cast*** George Hilton Will am Berger Patty Shepard, Marilu Tolo, Piero Lulli, Helga Line.

Rating.. ★★½

Comments The problem with this review is that it s based on a French language print and there s a LOT of dialogue (which is a handicap for this type of film no matter what language it might be in) So plot details will be sketchy A series of murders take place to hide the identity of a child killer As cast members discover who else they are quickly dispatched George Hilton plays a police detective (and for once he s NOT the killer!) who throughout the film displays his genius at solving crimes based on the evidence found at the scene. The killer s revealed by Hilton as he forces each of of the surviving cast members to look into a mirr or that belonged to the long ago murdered child. On the back she had drawn in chalk a picture of the guilty party. Ennio Morricone uses a child c humming to set the mood for this elegiac somber film However those looking for a score rich in thematic material will be disappointed. This time Morricone is using a very atonal approach to indicate the mind set of the maniac. Director Tonino Valeri pays tribute to his roots in the Spaghetti Western genre (he directed **DAY OF ANGER** and **PRICE OF POWER** he would be picked by Leone to direct **MY NAME IS NOBODY**) by having a character watch **DJANGO** on TV

Valerii also doesn't flinch from showing the red stuff during the murders. Right off the bat we have a graphic decapitation and later in the film the killer uses a portable circular saw to really chew up the front and back of a victim (of course it takes place in the bathroom). Helga Liné has a cameo as the wife of the first victim and her demise compared to her husband's is quite unbridled (she's strangled). And how about that Mario Tulli (she plays Hitler's lover) has she got Brooke Shields eyebrows! Omigod! Or what?!

LA MORTE CAMMINA CON I TACCHI ALTI
DEATH WALKS IN HIGH HEELS

Director Luciano Ercoli. ***Sc*** Manuel Velasco Ernesto Gastaldi, Dino Verde. ***Mus*** Stelvio Cipriani. ***Cast*** Susan Scott (Nieves Navarro [Fernando Di Leo suggested she change her name to S.S.)] Frank Wolff, Simon Andreu, Jorge Rigaud

Rating ★★½

Comments A spectacularly talky film (and like all of Ercoli's thrillers well over 100 minutes) that is saved by the twists and turns of its plot. Susan Scott is an exotic dancer (*ie* stripper) who has a relationship with a very violent boyfriend played by Simon Andreu. Frank Wolff is an eye surgeon who becomes infatuated with Scott (even though he's married). After spending lavish amounts of money as her for a new wardrobe she begins to take him more seriously. Meanwhile, she is receiving threatening phone calls which culminate in the maniac entering her bedroom and sticking a knife to her throat. The only distinguishing feature of the madmen is his piercing blue eyes (he was first seen killing a one-eyed man on a train). The surprise comes half way into the film when Scott is indeed killed (quite unfortunately as she is smothered to death with a pillow). There is still a lot of plot left to slug through including disarmed thieves and a transvestite.

As you might ascertain from the above the visual motif of Frank Wolff's profession goes director Ercoli a field day. At one point Wolff is seen filming a set of Scott's performances with a movie camera. Blind patients and a set of blue-colored contact lenses also figure into the scenario. Simon Andreu gives a fine performance as the timid boyfriend who is all too obvious as the red-herring of the cast. Stelvio Cipriani's score is a disappointment. I have to think he was overwhelmed by all that damn dialogue.

GLI OCCHI FREDDI DELLA PAURA
THE COLD EYES OF FEAR

Director Enzo Castellari (Enzo Girolami). ***Sc*** Enzo Castellari, Tito Carpi, Leo Anchoriz. ***Mus.*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast*** Frank Wolff, Fernando Rey, Glenn Garko, Karin Schubert, Giovanni Ralli

Rating ★★

Comments Considering the personnel in front and behind the camera this film is a frank disappointment (only Ennio Morricone comes out with reputation intact). Frank Wolff plays a maniac who is out for revenge against the judge (Fernando Rey) who first sent him to prison. Karin Schubert (who went as to star in perna films) has a great cameo scene that features her two best attributes. Glenn Garko is ineffective as the film's nominal hero. He was much more at home in Westerns where he starred as the *Sartana* character. The dubbing is really obtrusive as the entire cast are given poorly done British accents. Director Castellari has no feel for the Giallo genre.



Euro ad mal for Enzo Castellari's ***Cold Eyes Of Fear***

L'OCCHIO NEL LABIRINTO
BLOOD

Director Mario Caiano. ***Sc*** Mario Caiano, Antonio Saguera, Horst Hachler. ***Mus*** Roberto Nicolosi. ***Cast*** Rosemary Dexter, Adolfo Celi, Sybil Danning, Alida Valli, Horst Frank

Rating ★★★

Comments Julie (Rosemary Dexter) has a dream about killing her psych-artist/lover Luca (Horst Frank). It takes place in a labyrinth. She attempts to locate him and ends up meeting Frank (Adolfo Celi) who claims he'll try and help her yet what he really wants to do is to get inside her pants. She meets his mistress Greta (Alida Valli) and stays at her beach homes (which is also populated by a bunch of worthless young people who know Valli's son). It is revealed that most of these people knew Lucas and because he was such a scumbag all had a reason to kill him (as we learn in flashback). Meanwhile several attempts are made on Julie's life causing everyone at the house to distrust everyone else. When Julie accidentally kills one of their own they decide it's time to put her out of their

misery. She's rescued by Frank who intends to make her his sex slave but unfortunately for him, Julie did indeed kill Luca and now plans to do away with Frank the same way (ie: a long butcher knife). Mario Caiano (whose best film was **AMANTI O OLTRETOMBA [NIGHTMARE CASTLE]** with Barbare Steele) is an effective if dry teller and isn't afraid to revel in the two most saleable commodities of the genre: breasts and blood. The gutting and beheading of Luca is quite graphic for its day. A relatively flat-chested Sybil Danning appears as one of the worthless house guests and is put to good use.

The surprise twist of having Dexter be the killer is nice, but it does seem to cause those who care about political correctness (ie, Phil Hardy) some problems. Roberto Nicolosi's (his scores were always ways replaced by AIP with Les Baxter's work) music is quite atonal and jazzy but effectively relays the characters schizophrenia.

UN POSTO IDEALE PER UCCIDERE
AN IDEAL PLACE TO KILL
aka DIRTY PICTURES

Director Umberto Lenzi. ***Sc*** Luisa Drudi Demby, Antonio Ahovti, Umberto Lenzi. ***Mus.*** Bruno Laun. ***Cast:*** Irene Papas, Ray Lovelock, Ornella Muti, Michel Bardinet, Umberto D'Orsi.

Rating ★★★

Comments. This has to be one of Umberto Lenzi's most cynical films. If ever a director exposed his true feelings about the youth movement of the late 60s and early 70s, this is the one. This film makes Lucio Fulci look like a student radical. The film begins with star Ray Lovelock "singing" over the opening credits. Ray would go on to warble in Ruggero Deodato's **LIVE LIKE A MAN, DIE LIKE A COP** five years later for no noticeable improvement in his vocal talents. Anyway, Richard (Ray Lovelock) and Ingrid (Ornella Muti, who looks like Linda Blair with baby fat) are on holiday in Italy. They finance their trip by selling "dirty" pictures of Ingrid. After being caught and given 24 hours to get out of the country, they end up stranded at the home of Barbare (Irene Papas). At first she panics at the sight of them, soon however, she encourages them to stay and make themselves at home. It doesn't take long for Richard to discover that Barbare has killed her husband and intends to make him and Ingrid the guilty suspects.

Much movie running time is filled in with both sides playing a cat-and-mouse game of who will ultimately be set up for the murder. Finally Richard and Ingrid escape just as the police arrive (allowing Barbare to shift the blame onto the fleeing couple) only to loose control of the car as it goes around a curve and plummet hundreds of feet below, bursting into an inferno as it reaches the bottom.

Now Umberto: let me get this straight... Because Richard and Ingrid are hippies and believe in feminist principals (Ingrid posing in the nude kinda blows that one) they deserve to be beaten on an abandoned stretch of road? This took some cojones since Lenzi was basically spitting on the very audience these films were intended for.

QUALCOSA STRISCIA NEL BUIO
SOMETHING CREEPING IN THE DARK

Director Mario Colucci. ***Sc*** Mario Colucci. ***Music*** Angelo Francisco Lavagnini. ***Cast*** Farley Granger, Lucio Sosé, Giacomo Rossi-Stuart, Stan Cooper, Angelo Francesco Lavagnini, Loredana Nusciak.

Rating ★☆

Comments. To my knowledge director Mario Colucci hasn't directed many films and based on this effort it's easy to see why. The cast ends up in an old gothic styled house that may or may not be haunted. People become possessed and deaths occur but you'll be hard-pressed to care. The cast either overacts shamelessly (Granger and perennial whiner Stan Cooper) or remain comatose (Composer Lavagnini who CANNOT act). Lucio Sosé was much better in Jorge Grau's **THE FEMALE BUTCHER**.

QUATTRO MOSCHE DI VELLUTO GRIGIO
◆ FLIES ON GRAY VELVET

Director Dario Argento. ***Sc*** Luigi Cozzi, Dario Argento, Mario Foglietti. ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast*** Michael Brandon, Mimsy Farmer, Bud Spencer.

Rating ★★★☆

Comments. Musician Robert Tobias (Michael Brandon) is being followed by a mysterious stranger whom he accidently kills. During the altercation the ness someone up above taking photographs. At first he thinks blackmail is the photographer's motive, however he soon realizes that it's much more diabolical. His wife Nina (Mimsy Farmer) leaves him after their maid is killed. As more and more people around him die, Robert discovers from the police that the last image seen by his recently deceased new girlfriend (Argento and his scriptwriters concoct some bullshit *mumbo jumbo* process to explain and justify the film's title) was 4 flies. Going home he finds Nina has returned and wearing a pendant containing 4 flies. Just as she is about to kill him (he reminded her of the father she grew to hate), Robert's friend Gud (the aptly titled as Italian Olympic champion Bud Spencer) arrives and saves him. Nina ends up getting decapitated in a car accident.

There isn't much left to say about filmmaker Dario Argento (these days (though critics like John Martin amaze me by still doing so in an intelligent manner) as he's now been accepted into the critical mainstream. This film still holds up and is a good indicator that more ambitious work (ie **PROFUNDO ROSSO [DEEP RED]**) was just around the corner. Brandon has been criticized (and rightly so) for his rather bland portrayal however Mimsy Farmer has NOT received near enough credit for her role. Her screaming, raging psycho-freak out at the climax is Scream Queening at its finest!

LA TARANTOLA DAL VENTRE NERO
THE BLACK BELLY OF THE TARANTULA

Director Paolo Cavara. ***Sc*** Lucille Lake. ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast*** Giancarlo Giannini, Claudine Auger, Stefanie Santrelli, Barbara Bouchet, Rosella Falk, Silvano Tranquilli, Annabelle Incontrera, Barbara Bach.

Rating ★★★



Comments d an English language print of this film ever shows up, I'm sure the rating will go up. A series of murders involving the customers of a chic beauty salon, become the prime concern for Inspector Tellini (Giancarlo Giannini). He solves the case just in time to save his wife from suffering a similar fate.

The title tangentially revolves around both the murderer's modus operandi and the animal kingdom. The victims' bellies are ripped open with a sharp instrument much like a breed of wasp dispatches its deadly nemesis, the tarantula. I knew my degree in Wildlife Science would finally be put to good use eventually! Although she has a brief appearance, Barbara Bouchet's nude massage over the opening credits is a memorable one. Her murder sets the plot in motion as both the husband (Silvano Tranquilli) and lover meet similar fates. The killer is easy to "see" coming without too much guesswork. Cavara always makes his mark in whatever genre he tackles. His ability to coax a restrained performance from Giannini is miraculous. Morricone's score blends both noise and romantic type melodies to help the viewer remain on the edge of his seat. Although nothing more than skin and bones here, Sandrelli went on to be a major erotic presence in such films as Tinto Brass' **THE KEY** and **QUELLE STRANE OCCASIONI** (directed by Alberto Sordi) like **INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION** (Elio Petri) or **CONFESSIONS OF A POLICE CAPTAIN** (Damiano Damiani) than the Carlo Argento School.

Journalist Enrico Gallardi is killed in the back of a grimy alleyway. Police Inspector Luca Michelis (Fred Stafford), who is often criticized for his strong arm tactics, is assigned the job. Almost at once he is given anonymous clips that allow him to crack the case. He feels he's been setup and as releases the suspect the tips led him to. His Superiors question his motives and want him to wrap up the case immediately. Luca ignores all attempts at being setup and just as he is about to crash the case wide open and reveal all types of upper level corruption, he is massacred in a phone booth. The thriller portion of this film is considered as insignificant, that we never learn what Stafford discovered, why was Gallardi killed? Bazzoni is a competent director and he, along with cinematographer Claudio Ragana have fashioned an environment of shadows that certainly ads the paranoia and of things. Composer Riz Ortolani contributes a great musical score that belongs in an excellent Giallo. Unfortunately this isn't it.

AL TROPICO DEL CANCRO
TROPIC OF CANCER

Director Edward G. Muller (Edoardo Mulargia) ***Sc*** Antonio De La Loma, Antonio De Teffe (Anthony Steffen) Edoardo Mulargia ***Music*** Piero Umiliani. ***Cast*** Anthony Steffen Anita Strindberg Umberto Raho Gabriele Tinti.

Rating ★★

Comments Even setting this film on the island of Haiti can't save the rather dull premise of a doctor who because of an important medical discovery endangers those around him. This time the killer is after the medical secret for his own selfish end and he kills those who are attempting to bargain for the rights. Script writer Jose de la Loma would go on to become a prolific Euro-trash director of action movies (usually starring Jorge Rivero). Anthony Steffen on shaky ground here as the doctor certainly proves he's no screenplay writer either. Only Strindberg and especially Tinti distinguish themselves in this one.

ALLA RICERA DEL PIACERE
aka REPLICA DI UN DELITTO
AMUCK

Director Silvio Amadio ***Sc*** Silvio Amadio ***Music*** Ten Usuelli. ***Cast*** Barbara Bouchet, Farley Granger, Rosalba Neri, Dino Mele, Umberto Raho.

Rating ★★★

Comments Greta (Barbara Bouchet, who has never been better) arrives at the secluded home of writer Richard Stewart (Farley Granger) and his wife Eleonor (Rosalba Neri). She has been employed as Richard's new secretary. Their last one, Sally, has mysteriously disappeared. Before too long Greta learns that she has entered a den of iniquity as Richard and Eleonore participate in all types of perverted sexual games. Greta's real motive for being there is to find out what happened to Sally.

1972 **ABUSO DI POTERE**
SHADOWS UNSEEN

Director Camillo Bazzoni. ***Sc*** Fabio Pittorru, Massimo Felisatti. ***Music*** Riz Ortolani. ***Cast*** Frederick Stafford, Mariu Tolo, Franco Fabrizi, Corrado Gaipa, Claudio Gora, Ninetto Davoli, Raymond Pellegrin, Umberto Orsini

Rating ★★

Comments This film belongs more to the Paranoia thrillers

(she was Greta a childhood friend). She finds her self being drawn into Richard's evil lair and eventually falls in love. Richard explains that Sally s death was as accident, that Rocco, a brutish simpleminded local fisherman, choked Sally to death when she resisted his advances (sounds more like murder to me). Unfortunately for Greta, Richard was directly involved in the incident and he has decided it s time for Greta to join Sally.

Perversely permeates every frame of the film as Granger and Neri resemble characters culled from a Tennessee Williams novel. Their abode, set in the country and surrounded by swamps adds to the mood. Silvio Amadia with the film and **SMILE BEFORE DEATH**, obviously knew how to coax Rosalba Neri into giving definitive, wicked performances. Ample nude scenes with both her and Bouchet, makes the film as **ETC** lovers delight. The two rape scenes involving Rocco (Dino Mele) are unbearably protracted and hard to watch. Umberto Raho, as the butler is around for red-herring purposes only and is rewarded with a hook through the neck.

UN BIANCO VESTITO PER MARIALÉ
SPIRITS OF DEATH

Director Romano Scavolini. ***Sc*** Giuseppe Mangione, Remigio Del Grosso. ***Mus*** Florenzo Carpi. ***Cast:*** Evelyn Stewart, Luigi Pistilli, Ivan Rassimov, Pilar Velasquez, Gianni Dei.

Rating ★☆

Comments Romano Scavolini is mostly known in the country for directing **NIGHTMARES** (which used misleading advertising to imply that Tom Savini worked on the effects). Director Scavolini actually got his start in Italy working on Spaghetti westerns and this bizarre thriller.

The films opens in flashback as we see two lovers (Evelyn Stewart & Gianni Dei) frolicking on a blanket out in the woods (and feminists take note, it a Gianni Dei that is nude while Stewart keeps her clothes on!) The husband shows up and kills them both and then turns the gun on himself and blows his brains out. All of this is witnessed by his young daughter Mariale. Flash forward 20 years to where Mariale (Evelyn Stewart) and her husband Paolo (Luigi Pistili) are living a rather gloomy life inside an old mansion. Outside guests arrive summoned mysteriously by telegram. These inslude Massimo (Ivan Rassimov) a former lover of Mariale, Mercedes (Pilar Velasquez), Gustavo and Sammy the latter a pretty black actress who has come along for some cheap thrills, and several others. Instantly weird shit starts to happen such as power outages, cut telephone lines, and a snake that crawls up Mercedes leg. None of this seems to really bother anyone as they make plans for a huge dinner. Everyone dresses up in weird costumes (Gustavo dons a ballerina tutu) eats and drinks too much. A storm brews outside as people hallucinate, get chased by scorpions make love, ship, you name it. By now you're asking why is he reviewing the movie? Well, finally a servant is killed along with the majority of the guests (some in a rather graphic fashion) to justify its borderline status as a thriller. The killer is of course the mentally ill Mariale and in a circular ironical ending she along with her lover Massimo, are shot by Paolo who in turn, puts the gun up to his head and pulls the trigger. The film very much represents the era it was made in as the clothes and directorial technique resemble a bad acid trip. The cast for the film includes some of the best Italy has to offer but they are stuck in a bad film. The music by Fiorenzo Carpi is greatly aided by the orchestration of Bruno Nicolai in giving it a Morricone spin.

CHI L'HA VISTA MORIRE?
WHO SAW HER DIE?

Director Aldo Lado. ***Sc*** Massimo D'Avak, Francesco Barilli, Aldo Lado. ***Mus*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast*** George Lazenby, Anita Strindberg, Adolfo Celi, Dominique Sanchero.

Rating ★★★

Comments A child killer is on the prowl in Venice. Frances (George Lazenby) daughter Roberta has come to stay with him for the summer. Tragedy strikes as Roberta becomes the killer's second victim. Frances estranged wife Elizabeth (Anita Strindberg) arrives to comfort Frances as he becomes obsessed with finding his daughter's assassin. I'm sure it's just coincidental, but there are a lot of images here that would turn up later in Nicolas Roeg's **DON'T LOOK NOW** due no doubt, to the fact that they both involve the murder of a child and are set in the decaying city of Venice.

George Lazenby, the destined to be known as the unsuccessful James Bond, gives a good performance as the distraught father. Aldo Lado would also make **THE SHORT NIGHT OF THE BUTTERFLIES (PARALYZED** here in the USA) **NIGHT TRAIN MURDERS** (a.k.a **NEW HOUSE OF THE LEFT**) and **THE HUMANOID** (I'll try and not hold that against him). Morricone's wasp-esque chanting of young female voices for most of the score and it's obviously a very effective device here. One of the many thrillers where the killer is revealed to have ties with the Catholic Church.

5 DONNE PER L'ASSASSINO
FIVE WOMEN FOR THE KILLER

Director Stelvio Massi. ***Sc*** Roberto Gianviti, Gianfranco Clerici, Vincenzo Mannino. ***Mus*** Giorgio Gaslini. ***Cast*** Francis Matthews, Pascal Fivault, Giorgio Albertazzi, Howard Ross, Katia Christine.

Rating ★

Comments When you look at the personnel behind the scenes, especially the scriptwriting, the blame for this rancid piece of shit must be laid squarely on the shoulders of Stelvio Massi. The cast is as dull as dishwater, you know you're in trouble when the rollicking sleazy Howard Ross ends up playing a by the-book cop without any flaws. Giorgio Pisani arrives home to find his pregnant wife dead and his premature child in intensive care. A woman's doctor friend shows him a report proving him sterile, thus he realizes that his wife must have fooled around on him to get pregnant (she was desperate to have a child). Soon, associates and friends of Georgio start turning up with their

throats and hallos slashed open with a straight razor. All the slices lead to Giorgio (stiffly played by Francis Matthews) as of course, he's innocent. It was his doctor friend Lydia (Pascal Petardi) who was actually the sterile one and killing those who could have children.

Katia Christine as Giorgio's child's nanny is simply beautiful to look at, too bad she has the charm of cardboard. Massi, like Castellari, shows that horror films are not his cup-of-tea. He would prove that Cape-n-Fichters (with no horrific elements) is where his interest lie. The film also uses the two-killers motive so endemic to these films as a philanderling physician employs the modus operandi of the killer to get rid of a troublesome paramour. There are plentiful nude scenes and gore is abundant (however the crudely used torture, the killer's blade cuts up looks like Herschell Lewis was an on-the-set advisor) yet Massi's flaccid setups and execution really dings this mess down.

IL COLTELLO DI GHIACCIO
(an known English Language title)
Director Umberto Lenzi ***Sc*** Umberto Lenzi Antonio Troiso ***Mus*** Marcello Giombini. ***Cast*** Carroll Baker Eduardo Fajardo Alan Scott, Evelyn Stewart, Jorge Rigaud.
Rating ★★★½
Comments What a shame that Lenzi's most accomplished work in the field is not currently available in the country. It is basically his spin on **THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE** (1946) directed by Robert Siodmak in a precursor to his animal atrocity cannibal films. The film opens with Jennie (Evelyn Stewart) and Marta (Carroll Baker) attending a rather bloody bullfight. Lenzi instantly helps us to sort out character sympathies as Jennie seems to get off on the violence while Marta is disgusted. Jennie has returned home to visit her father (Jorge Rigaud). True to form for Stewart, she's killed off early on, her throat slashed. It is here that we realize Marta is a mute, because when she discovers the body her mouth opens to scream but no sound issues forth. Marta has recurring glimpses of a Martian like character with oddly colored eyes who may be the murderer. More deaths occur including the family a maid and a young girl (played by the same child actress that appeared in **THE BLOOD SPATTERED BRIDE**) join the list of victims.

The deaths may be linked to a Devil worshipping cult as police find an amulet and other evidence in a nearby graveyard. Like the aforementioned **THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE**, Baker ends up alone in her house threatened by a potential murderer. Surprise it's actually the family chauffeur Marcos (Eduardo Fajardo) who with the help of Rigaud and the police staged it all to uncover the fact that she is the killer! She had Jennie responsible for her last veins (it was psychosomatic as she lets out a scream when threatened by Marcos) and so killed her. The others had to die when they discovered her guilt. A very bold departure this time for the Lenzi/Baker team as you had to figure by now they too were tired of the formula. Having Baker play the entire film except for the final minute as a mute put the pressure on her to deliver a well-crafted performance which she does in spades. The revelation at the end really catches you off guard and the red-herring subplot of the Hippie looking suspect whose only crime is that he is a pathetic druggie helps cement the surprise.

LA MORTE ACCAREZZA A MEZZANOTTE
(no known English Language title)
Director Luciano Ercoli ***Sc*** Sergio Corbucci, Ernesto Gastaldi Manuel Velasco Roberto Leoni ***Mus*** Gianni Ferio ***Cast*** Susan Scott, Simon Andreu Peter Martell Claudio Lange, Carlo Gentili
Rating ★★★
Comments If you want to know about this film, than purchase ETC #5 and read all about it there! The thing I find interesting is that Sergio Corbucci, much better known for Westerns and comedies, had a hand in the script. Like all the other Ercoli thrillers discussed here, it's too damn long and involved but it is stylishly directed and features more than enough triangulations of plot to keep you guessing. Jorge Grau a regular photographer Fernando Arribas packs the film with lots of nice visuals and Ercoli doesn't shy from the red stuff. The fact that there are two murderers helps to categorize this one as a thriller all Italians.

LA MORTE NEGLI OCCHI DEL GATTO
7 DEATHS IN A CAT'S EYES
Director Antonio Margheriti. ***Sc*** Antonio Margheriti, Giovanni Simonelli. ***Mus*** Piz Ortolani ***Cast*** Jane Birkin Hiram Keller, Anton Diffring Venantino Venantini, Serge Gainsbourg
Rating ★★½
Comments In an interview with Margheriti stated for an



upcoming issue of *ETC*, he stated that this was his favorite contribution to the *Giallo* cycle. Well compared to **NUDE SI MUORE** it's a hard to argue but this film is no great shakes either. The film opens with a man being killed with a straight razor and his body dumped into a basement. As usual with these films, it has definite significance in the scheme of things. Meanwhile Corninga (Jane Birkin, who looks like she rented Mick Jagger's lips) arrives at her Aunt Mary's castle (the film is set in Scotland, thus secondary characters like perennial Antonio (Anthony Dawson) Margherita favorite Alan Collins are dubbed with a Scottish accent). There she meets Mary's supposed insane son James (Hiram Keller). Dr. Franz (Anton Diffring) and Father Robertson (Venantino Venantini). All of these people will fall into the category of suspicious characters once more murders take place. And before you know it people start dropping like flies such as Alicia (Corninga's mother) Angus (Alex Collins) Franz and finally Susan (James' "French" teacher who was actually a bi-sexual tart lured by Franz to help drive Mary over the edge). Oh yeah, let's not forget James' pet orangutan (also named James who looks more like a chimpanzee) who too bites the banana. When it's all said and done...the murderer is revealed to be Venantini, who isn't a real priest (that was how he killed before the opening credits) but a relative of Corninga, who intended to claim the family inheritance once he'd killed off those first in line. He ends up being shot by the local inspector (lethargically played by Serge Gainsbourg Birkin's real life husband). One of the biggest red herrings in this film is the bogus sub-plot involving the family curse centering around a Chimera or vampire. Much an screen dialogue is wasted on the non-occurrence. Riz Ortolani charmlessly recycles musical cues from the series Margheriti collaboration **VIRGIN OF NUREMBERG/ HORROR CASTLE**. Unfortunately because of the film's title we must suffer through endless shots of cat's eyes during the murder sequences. Nothing like a quick cut to a feline's orbs to dissipate the tension.

NON SI SEVZIA UN PAPERINO
DON'T TORTURE A DUCKLING

Director Lucio Fulci. ***Sc*** Lucio Fulci, Roberto Gianviti, Gianfranco Clerici. ***Mus.*** Riz Ortolani ***Cast*** Florinda Bolkan, Barbara Bouchet, Tomas Milian, Irene Papas, Marc Porel.

Rating ★★★☆

Comments Another film centering on the tragedy of child murder and like Lado's **WHO SAW HER DIE?** the guilty party comes from the Church. You gets love that Catholic guilt. Tomas Milian, in a very subdued part becomes involved in the investigation along with Barbara Bouchet (without a doubt one of the best looking women in the world). Local Gypsy Florinda Bolkan is the prime suspect in the murders and suffers a horrifying death at the hands of the bigoted locals.

If ever Fulci put himself "on the couch" in regard to revealing his phobias, this is the film. From revealing the stupidity of mob action to a distrust of the Church to the fear of Homosexuality it's all here on display. I doubt you can find a better example in Fulci's filmography of his superlative direction. When you compare this film to his more recent work you have to wonder if it's the work of the same man.

LA NOTTE CHE EVELYN USCÌ DALLA TOMBA
THE NIGHT EVELYN CAME OUT OF THE GRAVE

Director Emilio Miraglia. ***Sc*** Fabio Pittorru, Massimo Felisatti, Emilio Miraglia. ***Mus*** Bruno Nicolai. ***Cast*** Anthony Steffen, Erika Blanc (Enrica Bianchi Colombatto), Marina Malfatti, Giacomo Rossi-Stuart, Umberto Raho, Roberto Maldera

Rating ★★★

Comments Lord Alan Cunningham (Anthony Steffen) suffers a breakdown after the death of his wife Evelyn. His physician and friend Richard (Giacomo Rossi-Stuart) recommends he remarry as soon as possible to aid in his recovery (how's that for sound medical advice!). Alan meets Gladys (Marina Malfatti) and it's absolutely love at first sight. They soon marry but Alan begins suffering from hallucinations about his late wife (hence the title of this film). As we near the film's finale, we learn that Gladys along with Alan's cousin George (Roberto Maldera) are in league together to drive him mad (George would take over control of Alan's estate). They almost succeed if it were not for a makeshift time pit involving a box of Bonz Acid and a swimming pool. Alan and Richard had been caught on earlier to what was going on. Here's another film that gets no respect. So of course I like it. Instead of the old plot line of driving the wife insane **LA NOTTE...** turns it around toward the husband. The only problem is that he's pretty much over the-bend already.

Anthony Steffen (real name: Antonio De Teffe) really hams it up, almost to the film's detriment. The other negative is that Erika Blanc's performance is reduced to a cameo. Still there's plenty of twists and turns to keep one's interest going (oh yeah, there's lots of nudity too) until the end. Rat-faced Umberto Raho never disappoints.

PERCHE QUELLE STRANE GOCCE
DI SANGUE SUL CORPO DI JENNIFER?
WHAT ARE THOSE STRANGE DROPS OF BLOOD DOING ON THE BODY OF JENNIFER?

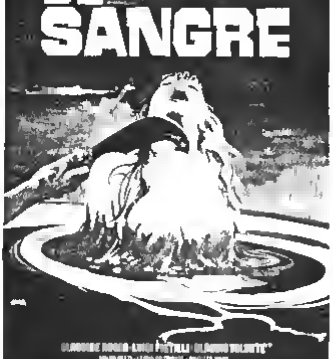
Director Anthony Ascott (Giuliano Carmineo) ***Sc*** Ernesto Gastaldi ***Mus*** Bruno Nicolai ***Cast*** Edwige Fenech, George Hilton, Paola Quattrini, Annabella Incontrera, Jorge Rigaud, Alan Collins

Rating ★★★☆

Comments It's a shame that Carmineo only directed one Giallo as he obviously understood how to get the most out of the genre. He's best known for his westerns (such as his excellent **SARTANA** series featuring Gleen Garko and later George Hilton and **IL MOMENTO DA UCCIDERE [THE MOMENT OF DEATH]** which also starred George Hilton) which is too bad as most horror fans turn their nose up at the thought of watching a film in this genre. Carmineo is greatly aided by the talents he had available both in front of and behind the camera. Murders are taking place in a high rise apartment complex and as usual the police don't

have a clue. When a black dancer (her act greatly resembles Darryl Hannah's look in the 1982 film, **BLADERUNNER**) is drowned in her bathtub, Jennifer (Edwige Fenech) and Marilyn (Paola Quattrini) move into the now vacant apartment. Jennifer meets Andrea (the impossibly handsome George Hilton) and it's love at first sight. However since this is an Italian thriller, and Hilton is the star, you know he's either going to be the killer or the director will milk his red herring status for all it's worth. The final piece of the puzzle is next door neighbour, Sheena (Annabella Incontrera), a lush who lives with her violinist father (Jorge Rigaud). The killing's persist and even occur outside the building (Paola is knifed on the street and throws even more suspicion onto Andrea), before the final wrapup scene it seems that Sheena's father, disgusted with her stylish ways decides to 'punish' all the loose women his daughter has or may encounter. And as shows up and causes the killer to plummet to his death (an almost obligatory means of dispatching with the villain).

Director Giuliano Carmineo casts his film with interesting faces, allowing Alan Collins a brief cameo, early in the film, as the club owner who's the black stripper worked. More important is Carla Mancini as Mrs. Moss, an ugly old crone (who makes Margaret Hamilton from **THE WIZARD OF OZ** look like a real babe) who has a defo mad son locked up in her apartment which allows the film makers to lead viewers in the wrong direction about who the killer might be. The score by Nicolai is pure thematic heaven, rich in strings and melodies. The luscious photography by future director Stelvio Massi allows him to indulge in his tendency to frame scenes at an odd camera angle to help set a mood of unbalanced ambience.



*Mario Bava's **Say Of Blood** (Twitch Of The Death Nerve) is a page f*

RAGAZZA TUTTA NUDA ASSASSINATA NEL PARCO
NUDE GIRL FOUND KILLED IN PARK

Director Alfonso Brescia. ***Sc*** Antonio Fea, Peter Skan. Gianni Martucci. ***Mus*** Carlo Savina. ***Cast*** Robert Hoffmann, Irina Demick, Pilar Velasquez, Howard Ross, Philippe Leroy, Adolfo Celi.

Rating ★★½

Comments Al Bradley is my nominee for the worst fucking Italian director. Name me one film he directed that reveals the least bit of talent (while his **BEAST IN SPACE** is trashy fun, it still proves my above point). A multi millionaire has been killed at an amusement park. Just a few days earlier he had taken out a million dollar life insurance policy. The insurance company sends in their best agent (Robert Hoffmann) to find a loophole to get them out of paying off the policy. As simple as that plot sounds, it gets totally convoluted by the time the film ends. Much like George Hilton, Hoffmann is the star, you can bet your ass he's the guilty party. Howard Ross as a mute (but still sleazy) stableboy has a sultry love scene with nymphomaniac Pilar Velasquez that is one of the few highlights of this film. Both Adolfo Celi (who was great in **WHO SAW HER DIE?**) and Philippe Leroy phone in their roles. Screenplay writer Martucci would go on to direct his own thriller in 1974 called **THRAUMA**.

SETTE ORCHIDEE MACCHIATE DI ROSSO
SEVEN ORCHIDS STAINED IN RED

Director Umberto Lenzi. ***Sc*** Umberto Lenzi, Roberto Gianviti. ***Mus*** Riz Ortolani. ***Cast*** Antonio Sabato, Uschi Glass, Pier Paolo Capponi, Rossella Falk, Marina Malfatti, Marcella Mell, Gabriele Gorgetti, Petra Schurmann.

Rating ★★★

Comments The film represents the first official adaptation of an Edgar Wallace story from the German studio that started it all in the late fifties. Roitz. Based on Wallace's *The Puzzle of the Silver Half Moon* (this title comes from the medallion left in the hands of each victim), the film is much more Giallo than *Krimi* (the German term used for the crime books Wallace wrote). The film revolves around Mario (Antonio Sabato) and Giulia (Uschi Glass), a veteran of many German made EW films) as they are threatened by a black gloved killer. In fact, there have been five deaths before them (including a prostitute (Gabrielle Gargetti), a painter (Marina Malfatti), an insane woman (Rossella Falk), an actress (Marcella Mell) and a lowlife (Petra Schurmann), all linked to a dead American.

The killer turns out to be a great (boy) religion surname (check on the chin in these films!) out for revenge. The print I saw was in Italian so I'm fuzzy

on the killer a motive on but there are other problems too. The video also has a real out of order as Marisa Mell is dispatched in an incredibly bloody sequence involving a power drill (did Brian De Palma see this film before making **BODY DOUBLE**?) yet turns up later in the film as Mesa is seen questioning her about her part in the murders! Ortolani's score is an enjoyable tribute to Morricone and is one of the best things about the film.

IL SORRISO DELLA IENA
SMILE BEFORE DEATH
Director Silvio Amadio. ***Sc*** Silvio Amadio, Francesco Villa, Francesco Orazio di Dio. ***Mus*** Bob Derament. ***Cast*** Rosalba Neri, Silvano Tranquilli, Luciana Della Robia.
Rating ★★★☆
Comments One of my favorites that has recently turned up in English under the above title (God Bless the Home Video industry of Finland and *Video Search Of Miami* for finding and importing!) This one follows the niche carved out by Lenzi which features an older woman (Rosalba Neri) undermined by a younger couple. The twist here is that because Neri has definite lesbian tendencies, it is a woman (Luciana Della Robia) and not a man who gets the better of her. Robia turns up to claim the estate and inheritance after the death of her mother. This surprises the shit out of Neri (and her sleazeball accomplice Tranquilli) because she murdered her thinking the ex was no legal heir other than husband Tranquilli. After much degradation, Robia seemingly walks off with the money leaving Neri and company on the hook for several more murders. As she leaves she gets run over by a car carrying the real daughter.

Amadio really is an unknown quantity in this country. He definitely has an eye for bringing sordid subjects to the screen (also see **REPLICA DI UN DELITTO**). Value specialist Edda Dell Orso sings a wonderful little ditty throughout.

SETTE SCIALLI DI SETA GIALLA
CRIMES OF THE BLACK CAT
Director Sergio Pastore. ***Sc*** Sergio Pastore, Sandro Continenza, Gianni Simonelli. ***Mus*** Manuel De Sica. ***Cast*** Anthony Steffen, Sylva Koscina, Giacomo Rossi-Stuart, Jeanette Lee.
Rating ★★★
Comments Models are once again the target victims of a mad killer. The use of a black cat's claws as a conveyance for the poison used to knock off the women is an original twist. Anthony Steffen is a blind composer who gets involved because the first victim was his lover. The killer is revealed as a badly scarred former model out to revenge herself for the loss of her beauty.

One of the problems I have with the film is lead Anthony Steffen. Maybe I've seen him in too many Westerns (**APOCALYPSE JOE**, **DJANGO THE BASTARD**, etc) but he can't seem to convince in a contemporary role. He seems stiff and is clearly unable to express the simplest emotion (in his Westerns he just had to walk around with a blank expression on his face).

Jeanette Lee (the lady with the cat) is Umberto Lenzi's wife. The film's main claim to fame is the very graphic **PSYCHO**-like shower murder sequence.

TUTTI I COLORI DEL BUIO
DAY OF THE MANIAC
Director Sergio Martino. ***Sc*** Santiago Moncada, Ernesto Gastaldi, Sauro Scavolini. ***Mus*** Bruno Nicolai. ***Cast*** Edwige Fenech, George Hilton, Julien Ugarte, Ivan Rassimov, Jorge Rigaud, Susan Scott, Marina Malfatti.
Rating ★★★☆



Euro print ad for Sergio Martino's ***Day Of The Maniac***

Comments You have to give director Sergio Martino credit on this one. Obviously tiring of the Giallo convention he mixes in Devil worship and elements of **ROSEMARY'S BABY**. Writer Saninge Mercado also worked on Mario Bava's **HATCHET FOR A HONEYMOON** and seems to have a thing about screwed up relationships.

Jane (Fenech) has a reoccurring nightmare of her mother being murdered by a man with a long stiletto blade. It is affecting her relationship with Richard (George Hilton) to the point where she decides to see a psychiatrist but her sister Barbara (Susan Scott) works for Dr. Burton (Jorge Rigaud) dedirces she is reliving a trauma from her childhood and recommends complete rest (don't they always?). Jane meets her new neighbor Mary (Martine Mellett) who, upon hearing of Jane's visions decides she needs to join a coven of Devil worshippers to help her with her problems (of all the outrageous bullshit!). It seems Mary had the same problem and it cured her. Jane accompanies Mary to a Black Mass where she learns that Julian Ugarte (from Paul Naschy's **WEREWOLF VS. THE VAMPIRE WOMEN**) is their leader. She also discovers that her mother was a cult member and her killer (played by Ivan Rassimov in all his glory) is still an active member. During the ceremony she drinks dog blood and rushes home to make love to Richard. Her second visit to Ugarte's coven results in her stabbing Mary (it's the only way to be free of the cult) and being threatened by Rassimov (whose voice is dubbed by Edmund Purdom) to keep her mouth shut. As everyone around her are being knocked off (including her sister who committed suicide as she too was part of the coven) the film ends with Ugarte and Hilton struggling atop the apartment building. Trna to Gallic form, Ugarte falls to his death. Martino really embellishes the film's atmosphere during the Black Mass rituals. He has the coven members looking like zombies as Nicolai goes wild with the musical score (it's one of his best). By this time even Martino realized that Hilton was the perfect red herring suspect as he has his character acting suspicious throughout. Scott is wasted (though she has a brief nude scene as all is not lost) in a role that requires her to only act as a cold bitch. Good use of London exteriors too.

IL TUO VIZIO È UNA STANZA CHIUSA E SOLO IO HO LA CHIAVE
GENTLY BEFORE SHE DIES aka EXCITE ME

Director Sergio Martino ***Sc*** Luciano Martino, Sauro Scavolini, Adriano Solzani. ***Mus*** Ennio Nicolai. ***Cast*** Edwiga Fenech, Luigi Pistilli, Anita Strindberg, Ivan Rassimov, Daniela Giordano

Rating ★★★★

Comments One of the best thrillers ever made. Period. This is my humble opinion as Sergio Martino's masterwork. Luigi Pistilli is a true son-of-a bitch who takes every opportunity to abuse (both verbally and physically) his poor wife Jane (Anita Strindberg). Into this cesspool from Hell enters cousin Floriana (Edwiga Fenech), a bi-sexual tramp who feels anyone who can further her own goals. Murders are taking place all around as maniac on seems to center on Pistilli. After he is finally killed by Strindberg the murders continue. Before the film is over Martino and his script writers are able to effortlessly work Edgar Allan Poe's **THE BLACK CAT** into the plot along with the Giallo staple of having two different killers plying their trade. Fenech is a short, crapped hairdo has never been sexier but even more impressive both in the nude scenes and the sleeping department is Anita Strindberg. Usually playing second fiddle in a total geeky two-shoes here she gets to pull out all the stops as she goes from an abused meek little mousey individual to a full-blown cold-hearted murderess.

Ivan Rassimov has a minor but effective cameo as Strindberg's mostly off camera accomplice. The scariest thing about his character is the way he was peddled with Lasilly. Bruno Nicolai's score here is among his richest yet in tone and variety. No one screws off in this one.

IL VIZIO HA LE CALZE NERE
VICE WEARS BLACK HOSE

Director Tano Cimarosa. ***Sc*** Luigi De Marchi. ***Mus*** Carlo Savina. ***Cast*** John Richardson, Dagmar Lassander, Ninetta Davoli, Magda Konopka, Cassandra Rosay Stuart, Daniela Giordano

Rating ★★

Comments Pure exploitation with out a whiff of talent describes this piss-poor effort. Director/actor Tano Cimarosa (he fails at both jobs) somehow managed to coax some fine actors to appear in this subpar effort. Daniela Giordano (in a senseless wordless cameo) opens the door and is blecchly dispatched by a gloved killer. John Richardson is the cop on the case and he, along with his buffoonish assistant (yes director Tano Cimarosa) spend the entire film interrogating witnesses. Meanwhile the killer continues to murder female friends of Leonora (Dagmar Lassander) who, though married to Graeme Rosay-Stuart) prefers the company of women. The primary red herring here is Leonora's idiot son who enjoys brandishing a straight razor and threatening her lovers. The film's ending literally goes to the dogs as the murderer is captured and mauled on by a pack of canines. Surprise, it was Stuart, who was getting revenge for his wife's sapphic-like tendencies. The film never skirts in the nudity department, as the scriptwriters saw to it that Lassander's character was employed as a photographer of nude women.

Early on there is a lovemaking sequence that truly borders on the hardcore, but there is no indication that anyone especially director Cimarosa were doing anything out going through the motions.

1973 **GLI ASSASSINI SONO NOSTRI OSPITI**
THE KILLERS ARE OUR GUESTS

Director Vincenzo Rigo ***Sc*** Renato Romano, Bruno Fantano ***Mus*** Roberto Fazzi ***Cast*** Anthony Steffen, Margaret Lee, Luigi Pistilli, Gianni Dei, Livia Cerini

Rating ★★

Comments A really nice cast is wasted in this crime film that is all but devoid of thriller elements. The

only reason for including it is the twist at the end that was a staple in the fold. Margaret Lee and two other jewel thieves escape from a botched robbery and take refuge at doctor Guido (Anthony Steffen in his typical somnubalistic contemporary performance) hanse in the country. Franco (Gianni Dei of **PATRICK STILL LIVES** fame) has been wounded and needs care. Guido's wife Mara (Livia Cerini in an over the-top performance that will have you on the floor) within minutes of being captured starts bad-mouthing poor Guido and casting aspersions on his manhood. Meanwhile harried (is there any other type?) police commissioner De Stefano (Luigi Pistilli) is assigned the case and true-to-form gets snarled from the higher ups to solve the case ASAP. After an hour or so of watching poor Mara get literally screwed over by most all the cast members (including Margaret Lee!) we find out that Oriana (the Lee character) and Steffen were in cahoots the entire time and they intend to run off to Argentina with the loot.

First they have to kill off the remaining gang members and Steffen takes special pride in plugging poor Mara (Lord knows everyone else did). Unfortunately for them, Pistilli is a genius at adding two-plus-two and greets them at the airport. The main highlight of this film is the dialogue spouted by different characters about Mara. Such doozies as "You with the ass - get some glasses. I promise to give you a quickie before I kill you," or how about this piece of advice given to Guido about his wife's anti social behavior "You didn't screw her enough." I'm afraid this type of philosophy is no longer applicable in the nineties. Or is it?

L'ASSASSINO...È AL TELEFONO
SCENES FROM A MURDER

Director Alberto De Martino. ***Sc*** Vincenzo Mannino, Adriano Bolzoni, Renato Izzo, Alberto De Martino. ***Mus*** Stelvio Cipriani. ***Cast*** Telly Savalas, Anne Heywood, Giorgio Piazza, Rossella Falk

Rating ★★

Comments Eleanor (Anne Heywood) a famous actress is currently under great stress as she tries to recover from the death of her lover Peter. She sights Ranke (Savalas) who she knows killed Peter and taints dead away. After awakening she finds all the details of her life in disarray. The balance is spent with her trying to convince everyone of Ranke's guilt. It all ends in an abandoned theater where she outwits and kills Ranke. Too late she discovers her sister Margaret (Rossella Falk) was in love with Peter and when he spurned her she had him killed. Her plan revealed Margaret commits suicide.

Alberto De Martino can usually be counted on to deliver the exploitable goods, however here, he is saddled with a very emaciated lead actress who, though willing to do the required nude scenes, really has no business trying to pass herself off as young and sexy. An uncharacteristically poor performance by Telly Savalas as a comatose-like hit man or else bad news. For better see De Martino's **FORMULA FOR A MURDER** and **THE MAN WITH THE ICY EYES** (which has sexy Barbara Bouchet)



I CORPI PRESENTANO TRACCE DI VIOLENZA CARNALE
TORSO

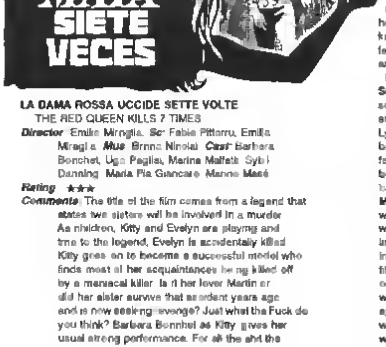
Director Sergio Martino. ***Sc*** Ernesto Gastaldi, Sergio Martino. ***Mus*** Guido & Maurizio De Angelis. ***Cast*** Suzy Kendall, Tina Aumont, Luc Merenda, John Richardson

Rating ★★★½

Comments It may be full of shit, but this is the film that signals the end of the Italian Giallo film as most people knew it. The gore an display here is without a doubt the most gruesome ever seen up to this time. When we start seeing the killer saw off the limbs of his victims you know there's no going back to the stylish good ol' days. The final 30 minutes of this film, with the killer stalking Suzy Kendall are a definite precursor to the slasher films of the eighties. Most of today's fans upon seeing this film would think Sergio Martino ripped off Sean Cunningham when he made this one. Like most Americans I first saw this on the lower half of a double-bill with **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**. While the former went on to fame and fortune, poor **TORSO** still gets no respect. The comical thing is that "*Scream*y" would have you believe that TCM was the genesis of the two. NOT!

For me at the time TORSO fashioned some nasty hacksaw gnas and oodles of wonnerful undraped female flesh. In a nod to (or a direct ripoff from) Dario Argento's **THE BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE**, Tina Aumont can't quite remember a crucial detail that would identify the murderer (who was wearing the tall and black scarf?) In time to save her friends Ernesto Gastaldi, who would sometimes go by the name Julian Berry, scripted all of Martino's thriller scripts along with some of the better ones not directed by Martino (Carmineo's

WHAT ARE THOSE STRANGE DROPS OF BLOOD ON THE BODY OF JENNIFER?) He also directed **LIBIDO** (less reverse) and a variant on **STRAW DOGS** (before Peckinpah) called **LONELY, VIOLENT BEACH.** If the scriptwriter is the true genius behind a film then Gastaldi is the Einstein of the Giallo Genre. Joseph Brenner edited 4 minutes from the original Italian version and hired Edmund Purdom to dub Lini Mercenda a voice (how's that for useless information?!)



LA DAMA ROSSA UCCIDE SETTE VOLTE
THE RED QUEEN KILLS 7 TIMES

Director Emilio Miraglia. ***Sc*** Fabio Pittorru, Emilio Miraglia. ***Mus*** Bruno Nicolai. ***Cast*** Barbara Bouchet, Ugo Pagliai, Marina Malfatti, Sybil Danning, Maria Pia Giancaro, Marino Masé.

Rating ★★★

Comments The title of the film comes from a legend that states two sisters will be involved in a murder. As children, Kitty and Evelyn are playing and true to the legend, Evelyn is accidentally killed. Kitty grows on to become a successful model who finds most of her acquaintances being killed off by a maniacal killer. In her lover Martin or did her sister survive that accident years ago and is now seeking revenge? Just what the Fuck do you think? Barbara Bouchet as Kitty gives her usual strong performance. For all the shit the horror genre gets for being women haters some brilliant artist posing as a professor at a University should delve into these films and document just how often a woman turns the tables on the usually male killer and emerges as the heroine. Instead of the victim (ignoring of course the fact that women were being slaughtered for the first 85 minutes). Whereas Miraglia's **THE NIGHT EVELYN..** was brought down by Anthony Steffen a silly portrayal of a man suffering from a mental illness **THE RED QUEEN KILLS 7 TIMES** has no such defects. In fact both Bouchet and Malfatti give real feeling to their roles of the intimate rivalling rivalry. Look for a very young Sybil Danning in a nipple-slip role as a prostitute.

PASSI DI DANZA SU UNA LAMA DI RASOIO
DEATH CAPPIES A CANE aka THE TORMENTER

Director Maurizio Pradeaux. ***Sc*** Arpad De Riso, Maurizio Pradeaux, Alfonso Balcazar, George Martin. ***Mus*** Roberto Pregadio. ***Cast*** Susan Scott, Robert Hoffmann, Annika Soreva, Simon Andreu, George Martin.

Rating ★

Comments I have a high tolerance for trash, but a film like this tests even my low standards to their very core. **DEATH CARRIES A CANE** is so bland as cliche-ridden as Fucking awful yet so entertaining that it ends up getting an average rating in spite of all that. Kitty (Susan Scott) is waiting for her fiance Alberto (Robert Hoffmann of **EROTIC PASSIONS**) at a format observatory when she sees (through a coin-operated telescope) a young woman being brutally knifed to death. The killer is wearing the standard attire (black gloves, black overcoat and hat) and as can't be identified. Even after telling her story to the police inspector (George Martin, in a plastered-down, jet-black toupee that makes him look like a lounge singer from Hell!), no one seems to believe her. We are introduced to the rest of the cast, and a more likely group of suspects and red-herrings I've yet to witness. There is Alberto, who knew the first victim and is often caught knifing faceless clothing store dummies (he as a performance artist and this is part of his act, yeah sure.)

Marco (Simon Andreu of **NIGHT OF THE SORCERERS**) who is a composer and worked with soon to be victim #2 for a future concert appearance. Sylvia (Anoska Soreva) and her twin sister Lydia (also played by Soreva), the latter hates ballet music which just happens to be the profession of the victims. Sylvia's creepy look-a-boyfriend (Serafino Profumo) he played the hunchback in Joe D'Amato's **DEATH SMILES ON A MURDERER**) is even shown staring at a store window display of straight razors (the killer's weapon of choice). Finally, the killer walks with a limp and uses a cane (hence the film's title) and we indeed see Alberto and Sylvia using one early in the film. As you would expect, the none has no bearing on who the killer is. With all these characters to play with, the film easily fills its 89 minute running time spreading around the suspicion, but must to a climax when the killer is shot down while he lyes (who it was Marco) is about to finish off Kitty in a greenhouse. Amazingly enough, though Marco's wife attempts to explain why he did it, the words come out in such a non-sequitur fashion that you're left with no idea why he was knocking off ballet nuns in the first place (either that or I'm as dumb as a box of rocks). No one, either in front of nor behind the camera, distinguishes themselves in any form. Even Roberto Pregadio's patented thriller score seems to have no effect on the film when it is heard.

George Martin had a hand (or was it really his middle finger?) in the script and one wonders if he was responsible for the dialogue his character spouts such as the time he asks a fellow co-worker is "Get me the files of all the deviants and sex offenders with leg disabilities." I don't know about you, but these bastards are really organized! Finally I can't even recommend the film's copious amount of female nudity because (except for Susan Scott) the actresses who appear here need breast implants to distinguish them from the male nest members. Besides as a crime no film should inflict

on his audience **DEATH CARRIES A CANE** should be banished to the same Hell that many of Jesus Franco's films belong in.

REVELAZIONI DI UN MANIACO SESSUALE AL CAPO DELLA SQUADRA MOBILE
SO SWEET, SO DEAD
aka THE SLASHER IS A SEX MANIAC
Director Roberto Montero ***Sc*** Luigi Angelo, Italo Fasani ***Mus*** Giorgio Gaslini ***Cast*** Farley Granger, Sylva Koscina, Silvan Tsiaquilli, Annabella Incontrera, Femi Benussi, Chris Avram, Krista Nell, Sissa Scott.
Rating ★★★
Comments You'll want to take a bath after wallowing in this film for 90 minutes. Roberto Montero was never one of your more subtle directors and here, he really cuts loose in the gore and sniffy department.

Rich society wives are having their throats slit by a maniac dressed in the standard black gloves mask hat and overcoat. The women targeted were all having extra-marital affairs and in fact the killer leaves pictures of them with their lovers (the male face amputated out) at each scene. Into the mess comes inspector Capriana (Farley Granger).

Prevarina is being put on him by the press and the higher ups to solve the case immediately. He does as (the killer turns out to be) The Professor played by Chris Avram, the antipsy doctor) but not before allowing the maniac to kill Capuana's wife whom he discovers is having an affair with a younger man.

A really sick film whose female cast list reads like a who's who of victims. They are trotted on screen, in great star status promptly perform their nude scene, get sliced open and off rate. Sissan Scott and Silvana Tranquilli are featured in an explicit love scene that burns up the screen. Giorgio Gaslini's score borders on minimalism, utilizing a saxophone and a woman's voice to add a little class to the sordid goings on.

Hardcore sex scenes with Kim Pope, Harry Reems and Tina Russell were added to a U.S. release (for the *Adult* theatre circuit) under the title **PENETRATION** in 1976.

TERZA IPOTESI SU UN CASO DI PERFETTA STRATEGIA CRIMINALE
WHO KILLED THE PROSECUTOR AND WHY?
Director Joseph Warran (Giuseppe Vari) ***Sc*** Thomas Lang ***Mus*** Mario Bertolazzi. ***Cast*** Lee Castel, Seba Lancar, Adolfo Celi, Massimo Serato, Umberto D'Orsini, Carla Mancina.
Rating ★½
Comments This is what I call a Mafia Giallo. By stating such, believe me, this is no compliment. The film takes the worst elements of both genres and mixes them into a mish-mash of stupidity. A local prosecuting attorney is killed and the murderous act is witnessed and even more importantly photographed by Carla (Lee Castel) and his girlfriend Olga (Seba Lancar - a minor flavor of the month actress).

They take the photos to Marco Cerarelli (Massimo Serrato) alias Ivan Smirnov alias Uncle "Fifi" Marco is confined to a wheelchair and makes his living filming nude models for magazines. He advises them to contact local Mafia Capo Don Salvatore (one of the nurses was arrested as a suspect) to see if he would pay for the pix.

When they are snubbed by the Godfather they decide to go to the local tabloid for a quick sale. From here on, everyone Castel comes in contact with, including "Fifi" and Olga are killed by a mysterious assassin out to get the negatives in a positively convoluted finale we learn that the killer was a newspaper editor who was involved in a drug ring that the prosecuting attorney had uncovered.

The obvious failing of the film, besides Vari's utter lack of talent, is the uneven mixture of genres. Just when you think it is about to become a full fledged thriller the Mafia antiplot intrudes and vice versa. Giuseppe Vari has proven himself with this and many other films of his I've seen, to be the Andy Warhol of the Italian film industry. He takes the simplest action and drags it out ad infinitum. For example: do we really need to see a man getting in his car roll down his window look around to see if there is any oncoming traffic put the car into reverse and *slowly* back his car down the FUCKING driveway. I think not. Vari at times seems obsessed with minutia. If he ever starts filming endless parades of walking feet, WATCH OUT DORIS WISHMAN! Oh yeah, the score belongs in a Pen Ormond opus.

L'UOMO PIU VELENOSO DEL COBRA
HUMAN COBRA
Director Albert J. Walker (Sitte Albertini) ***Sc*** Edoardo Brochero, Ernesto Gastaldi, Luciano Martino ***Mus*** Stelvio Cipriani ***Cast*** Giorgio Ardisson, Erika Blanc, Alberto De Mendoza, Janina Reynaud, Alan Collins.
Rating ★½
Comments This film, much like **AL TROPICO DEL CANCRO [TROPIC OF CANCER]** proves that the Giallo works best in an urban location. **L'UOMO PIU VELENOSO DEL COBRA [THE MAN MORE VENOMOUS THAN THE COBRA]** is set, for the most part in Kenya and uses a safari as the linchpin for most of the plot details to be worked out in. The jungle does not create a suspenseful enough environment to aid this tale of revenge. Tony a (Giorgio Ardisson) brother Johnny has been killed and his widow Leslie (Erika Blanc) enlists Tony a aid in discovering who the murderer is. The main suspect is George (Alberto De Mendoza) Johnny's business partner. During a safari elephant hunt, George is killed and we learn that it was Leslie who was the murderer. She also was responsible for the attempt made on Tony's life as well. Before she is brought to justice she commits suicide. Oh well.

It's disappointing enough to see the people involved in writing the screenplay Erika Blanc gives a performance that rhymes with her last name. She's not given enough to do so she is placed in the background for too much. Giorgio Ardisson has always wavered from comatose to ham and this film finds him on the near-death side of the fence. Even Cipriani's score is listless (not helped by the film's location).

1974 L'ASSASSINO HA RISERVATO NOVE POLTRONE
THE KILLER RESERVED NINE SEATS

Director Giuseppe Rennati. ***Sc*** Mario Chiari. ***Mus.*** Carlo Savina. ***Cast*** Rosanna Schiaffino, Chris Avram, Eva Czemerys, Lucretia Love, Paola Senatore, Janet Agren, Howard Ross

Rating ★★½

Comments I'm about to make a very sexist remark (Big Surprise!) but were it not for the fact that all of the actresses (except for Schiaffino) get naked in this one, it would barely rate 2 stars. This overlong (103 minutes) and talky thriller centers its action in an abandoned theater (looking very much like the one in **OPERA**). Patrick (Chris Avram) gathers the players for his new stage production to rehearse their parts. It isn't long before strange things begin to occur. The usual spooky goings-on start happening first, such as the lights shutting off and a beam falling from the ceiling. Then things take a turn for the worse when Kim (Janet Agren) is killed on stage right before everyone's eyes. Even though a murder has taken place, all the characters take every opportunity to grab some up 'n down action. They act like this is a **FRIDAY THE 13TH** film where the only thing people listen to are their hormones.

As more and more characters get knocked off (including lesbian lovers Eva Czemerys and Lucretia Love) the screenwriters introduce a supernatural element involving a ghostly caretaker. Talk about revealing all the angles! The film ends with Avram being revealed as the crazed one, however the Paola Senatore (who went on to become both a drug addict and a hardcore porno starlet) character and her paramour were also adding to the body count for their own perverted reasons. They are done in by the ghost character.

Schiaffino (who looks like a young Angelica Huston) escapes to freedom. Not much of exception here as its all silly & by-the-numbers Giallo. The supernatural subplot is a complete failure as it is never more than a quick way to wrap the film up. A bore.

GATTI ROSSI UN LABIRINTO DI VETRO
EYEBALL aka THE SECRET KILLER

Director Umberto Lenzi. ***Sc*** Felix Tussell. ***Mus.*** Bruno Nicolai. ***Cast*** Martine Brochard, John Richardson, Ines Pellegrini, Marta Miller, Silvia Solar, Marta May, Jorge Rigaud

Rating ★☆

Comments Without a doubt, this film is the worst thriller produced by the prolific Lenzi. Whoever Felix Tussel is, he has to take the lion's share of credit for producing the execrable mess. It's a combination thriller/tour guide to Barcelona with the latter getting more exposure than the former. This is NOT the way to make an exciting film. Alma Burton (Marta May) is on her way to NY for medical care when she decides to detour to Barcelona. Her husband, Mark (John Richardson), is there to meet with his secretary Paulette (Martine Brochard) to consummate their love affair. She is an ex-con with a diverse group of people such as Reverend Brennan (Jorge Rigaud, Jesus!) never knew this old fart was in so many of those films until now!) and Lisa (Marta Miller, who starred in a shit load of Paul Naschy films) a lesbian photographer.

With minutes people on the tour are knifed and their left eye removed. Mark's wife Alma, appears to be running around in the background and through an entire set of ludicrous circumstances (such as the fact that there was a similar series of murders back home in Vermont and Mark found her lying on the ground passed out with a bloody knife and an eyeball by her side!) she appears to be the killer. But hey, we knew better, don't we? Well as the victims run out, we discover that the killer is Paulette, whose motive for the murders is based on the fact that as a child she had her eye ripped out by a friend who is they were playing doctor! I don't fucking believe it! An absolute embarrassment for one & all, even Bruno Nicolai scores indifferently. This is the type of film where *everyone* acts suspiciously just as they can be considered a suspect. You know you're in trouble in this one when during a flashback Richardson's character is seen driving a Pontiac and he states "I was driving a Pontiac." NO shit Sherlock. Hopeless dud dumb fun. For all you fans of Edmund Purdom's dubbing ability, listen to the doctor presiding over the first autopsy scene (that actor by the way played a police inspector in **DAY OF THE MANIAC**).

MACCHIE SOLARI
AUTOPSY aka THE VICTIM

Director Armando Crispino. ***Sc*** Armando Crispino, Lucio Battistrada. ***Mus.*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast*** Mimsy Farmer, Ray Lovelock, Barry Primus, Massimo Serato, Angela Goodwin.

Rating ★★★

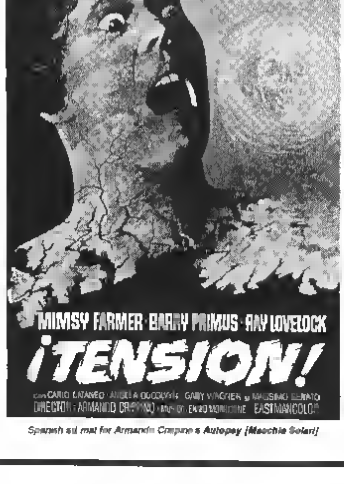
Comments Compared to Crispino's tame (and lame) **THE ETRUSCAN KILLS AGAIN**, this film (to use a cliche) delivers the foodstuffs. A sick film that doesn't flinch when it comes to telling around in the lives. All over Rome people are committing suicide. As we'll see, the film could care less about that, as other than a mention near the end about the evil sun of summer, the suicides are never explained.

The real plot of the film centers around Dr. Serena (Mimsy Farmer) and her work as an autopsy physician. She is working on a method of study that will be able to determine whether a suicide was faked or not. When a neighbor of hers (who was also involved with her father, played by Massimo Serrato) is found dead on a local beach, a victim of suicide. Simone, along with her boyfriend Ed (Ray Lovelock), discover she was actually murdered. The victim's brother, Father Lennox (Barry Primus), is a creepy individual whom was a former race car driver. When his car spun out of control and killed a dozen people, he went temporarily crazy, only to become a priest after a stay at an insane asylum (sounds good to me). So he becomes suspect #1 as more and more people, including Serrato are done away with in a bereavement, much too complicated to go into here. We discover that the killer is Ed. He was after an old bible that contained his father's will which would have disinherited him. All the dead either knew where it was or what it contained causing Ed to do away with them. In the

now typical ending for these types of films. Ed and Father Lennox struggle atop a tall building, only to have Ed (or Ed's dummy, jeez, I would have love to of had the dummy concession in Italy during the seventies) plummet to the ground below. Farmer's performances can be likened to the sound made when dragging your fingernails across a chalk board. Shes in a constant state of jitteriness and anfters from a bad case of frigidity (Ed refers to her as his 'little ice cube'). Ennio Morricone's score picks up on this as his constant rise of a woman's voice to eliminate an orgasm reinforces her state of mind. That said, when Mimsy does decide to do the nasty, she (and Crispino) ants loose as the sex scenes are quite graphic.

The gore is as you might expect with a film centering around the exhumation of dead bodies, also no holds barred. In a perfect bit of type casting, my old favorite Ernesto Colli (see the review of **DEADLY INHERITANCE**) plays Eve, the necrophilic morgue worker to perfection.

Finally, most reference books list the running time of this film as 120 minutes which I dispute. Although the version out here as **AUTOPSY** is cut at 83 minutes, the Euro-versions from France and Italy clock in at 100 and in my opinion are the full length ones.



Spanish cut mat for Armando Crispino's ***Autopsy*** *[Maschio Solari]*

LA POLIZIA CHIEDE AIUTO
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOUR DAUGHTERS?
Director: Massimo Dallamano. ***Sc.*** Ettore Sanzo, Massimo Dallamano. ***Mus.*** Stelvio Cipriani. ***Cast:*** Giovanna Ralli, Claudio Cassinelli, Mel s Adarf, Farley Granger, Franco Fabrizi

Rating: ★★½

Comments: Back in 1971, director Dallamano made **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO SOLANGE?** It was set at a girl's school and featured a psychotic killer wiping out the enrollment class. It was on to successful and no doubt was responsible for Dallamano returning to this locale. However this time around, it's more of a police procedural, and we all knew how boring they are. A young co-ed is found hanged in an attic. There is evidence she was actually murdered somewhere else and brought to this location to make it look like a suicide. Crusading detective Silvestri (the late Claudio Cassinelli) takes over and proceeds to head first tilt into discovering the truth. He is helped by a lady DA (Ralli) and discovers the seed of truth. It involves child prostitution and corruption in the upper echelons of the police department. (Yawn, what else is new?) and before it's all over, plenty of grue has come on way. Dallamano doesn't flinch in the gore department as we see a corpse cut up like a side of beef, a hand amputation right out of The Argento School of Shock Setups, and a head rolling out of a plastic bag, but it's all so staged.

Cinematographer Dell' Colli apparently goes out of his way to provide extremely drab lighting which downplay any atmosphere Dallamano may have had in mind. Dallamano himself, like Aristide Massaccesi (D'Amato) before him, is another cinematographer turned director who appears to have lost all sense of atmospheric composition. This film does feature one of Stelvio Cipriani's best scores with the mood enhancing the action each time it breaks forth. Farley Granger has a bit part but seems to be hiding he time until his can get his head blown off in **THE PROWLER** some seven years later.

SPASMO
SPASMO
Director: Umberto Lenzi. ***Sc:*** Massimo Franciosa, Luisa Montagnana, Pino Solfar, Umberto Lenzi. ***Mus:*** Ennio Morricone. ***Cast:*** Robert Hoffmann, Suzy Kendall, Ivan Rassimov, Maria Pia Conte

Rating: ★★★

Comments: Until you can see an English language print of this film, I recommend you not bother. It is so convoluted and talky that until you're able to follow all the twists and turns of the plot, you can't begin to appreciate all that Lenzi and his fellow screenwrite s were trying to accomplish. For the first hour of this 90 minute sleeper, you will sit as in the dark as the main character Christian (Robert Hoffmann). In short order he meets and almost beds Barbara (Suzy Kendall), but is interrupted by an assassin (who looks like Dario Argento only with better hair). Christian 'kills' him and they escape to a deserted chateau where they meet an odd couple Malcolm and Clarinda (the oddly attractive Maria Pia Conte)

Before you know it, Christian admits to the killing and flees. All the same time, women are being murdered (offscreen) and new their bodies are found, a plastic dummy hanging from a tree with a knife in its belly. We finally learn that Christian and his brother Fritz (Ivan Rassimov, dubbed with a fey voice) inherited a huge business from their deceased father (he was mentally deranged and committed suicide). It seems that Fritz has been trying to drive his brother insane to get him the medical help he needs (a rather extreme method of "help" in my opinion). Unfortunately he succeeds, resulting in the death of Barbara and many others. Christian is killed by Barbara's lover as we discover that Fritz too, has begun to show tendencies of stabbing mannequins with a long knife. For the American release of this film, George Romero filmed approximately 10 minutes of explicit violence to help spice up the film. The print I saw was obviously the original export version, because we don't know who the murderer might be, nor all the killings are shown when they occur (which runs similar to ALL other Giallos where you witness the murder sequence either as a participant or as a victim). While certainly original, I can't see how that would pose a problem for the film's producer.

There's no nudity to speak of either so Lenzi really left exploitation fans in the lurch. However, I like this all distinctly refreshing and would use this film to prove to fans disgusted by Lenzi's cannibal films that the man really does know how to make an entertaining film that relies on plot and atmosphere alone. Morricone's score is among his best (comparable to the one he penned for **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO SOLANGE?**). What a shame only a few cuts have been released on disc.

1975 **NUDE PER L'ASSASSINO**
STRIP NUDE FOR YOUR KILLER

Director Andrea Bianchi. *Sc* Massimo Felisatti. *Mus*. Berto Pisano. *Cast* Edwige Fenech, Femi Benussi, Nino Castelnuovo, Erna Schurer.

Rating ★★★

Comments The pre-credit sequence of a woman dying while having an abortion performed is all the motivation needed by one of the characters to start killing off members of the cast. The action is scattered around the Albatross photography studio. We are introduced to Carlo (Nino Castelnuovo) at a health clinic where he is seen among one of the patrons (Femi Benussi) into chipping for him. She does gladly (even going as far as doing the nasty in the steam room) since he promises her a job at the studio where he works as a photographer.

Here we are introduced to the employees/victims/red herrings along with someone who'll eventually be the killer. Carlo has the hots for Magda (Edwige Fenech in short hair) and who can blame him? They eventually get down to the business of screwing as characters all around them are being knocked off.

Eventually Carlo and Magda are left to do battle with the assassin. We learn that one of the models, Patrizia, has been getting revenge on those at the studio who feels were responsible for her friend's death that took place during the opening credits. It's significant (I think) that during this year (1975) two films featured a woman as the killer. Most likely why fairly typical will tell you that this was the result of an inherently feminist response to the genre's staples of abusing women. Me, I think the script writers were just desperate for a new angle. Andrea Bianchi is nothing more than a hack director, but as we can see here, sometimes the ambient master requires nothing more. He's greatly aided here by the crystal clear night photography of Stefano Gabor. Berto Pisano's score sounds like a bad plantation wannabee. The opening theme you'll swear dialogue in a Richard Rodriguez filmography. Erna Schurer is one of the models and has the unfortunate jab at appearing in one of the most degrading sex scenes ever (imagine being asked to let a 400 lb. clod in a jockey short dripper pawn your breasts). Erna is in desperate need of an eyebrow transplant. I wonder if actor Castelnuovo knew that his balls would make an art-cover appearance due to Bianchi's inept camera staging?

The ending is the height of bad taste; after all Carlo and Magda have been through, Carlo decides to try and butt fuck her. The frame freezes over Magda's protests. This is funny?

PROFONDO ROSSO
DEEP RED

Director Dario Argento. *Sc* Dario Argento, Bernardino Zapponi. *Mus* Giorgio Gaslini and The Goblins. *Cast* David Hemmings, Daria Nicolodi, Gabriele Lavia, Macha Meril, Clara Calamai.

Rating ★★★½

Comments Is there anybody left who doesn't already know what this film is all about? Lead knows if you haven't seen it by now, nothing I can say will do any good. Semi-writer Zapponi went on to help Paolo Cavara write the excellent **E TANTA PAURA** and so must be given credit here for his contribution. Composer Giorgio Gaslini also did the music for **LIVING DEAD AT MANCHESTER MORGUE [DON'T OPEN THE WINDOW]** and **NIGHT OF THE DEVILS**. Actor Lavia was in Pupi Avati's **NEVERGO OF THE DEAD** and went on to direct **EVIL SENSES**. Macha Meril was the ultimate rich bitch in **NIGHT TRAIN MURDERS** by Aldo Lado.

1976 **L'ASSASSINO È COSTRETTO AD UCCIDERE ANCORA**
THE KILLER STRIKES AGAIN

Director Luigi Cozzi. *Sc* Luigi Cozzi, Daniele Del Giudice, Adriano Bolzoni. *Mus* Nanda de Luca. *Cast* George Hilton, Michel Antoine, Christine Galbo, Femi Benussi, Alessio Orsea, Eduardo Fajardo.

Rating ★★★★

Comments Had Luigi Cozzi used this film as an indication of his true talents instead of going on to direct utter shit like **STARCRASH** and **HERCULES**, he might have been regarded with respect, rather than as the guy who works the counter at Dario Argento's *Profondo Rosso* book store. George Hilton can't stand his shrew of a wife as he kills her and stuffs her in the trunk of his car.

There is an ak et morbidness to this film that has rarely been equalled in any other thriller. Michel Antoine wins, hands down, the award for creepiest villain, period! When he relentlessly and repeatedly brutalizes poor Christine Galbo it almost forces you to turn away from the screen. Galbo is a fine actress and is best known for her portrayal in **THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED**. Alessio Orano is a crummy hero who is almost as scarybeeking as the villain. Due to the two separate story lines George Hilton has more of a guest star role in this film. He is a suave debonair bastard as usual. Eduardo Fajardo gives a Colombo-type spin to his part as the police detective who just won't leave Hilton alone. He will always be remembered as the psychotic Colonel Jackson in **DJANGO** (did you know that Fred Ward dubbed Franco Nero's voice in that film? Thanks to Ally Lamaz for that important piece of trivia.) Lastly there's pret- lovely (even in that awful blonde w g) Femi Benussi degrading herself in the comic role of a floozy. Her entire part in this film is so she can be featured in an explicit nude scene and then be graphically slaughtered. It's roles like these that makes the Giallo films so politically incorrect.

PASSI DI MORTE PERDUTI NEL BUIO
DEATH STEPS IN THE DARK

Director Maurizio Pradeaux. ***Sc*** Arpad De Riso, Maurizio Pradeaux. ***Mus*** Riz Ortolani. ***Cast*** Leonard Mann, Robert Webber, Vera Kruska, Nino Melmans.

Rating ★½

Comments Lame is the only adjective I can use to describe this one. With this film and **DEATH CARRIES A CANE** director Pradeaux proves he doesn't know shit about generating suspense. Time after time he dissipates mood and effect with his clumsy direction. The film opens on a train where we find the protagonist Luciano (Leonard Mann who dubs his own voice) and his model girlfriend Ingrid (Vera Kruska in a performance that truly personifies the term "dumb Blonde.") in a crowded compartment. A nervous young woman among the group is knifed with Luciano's letter opener during a blackout. Luciano becomes the main suspect of police Inspector Robert Webber (who dares not dub his own voice). As more of the train passengers get knocked off it becomes apparent that Luciano was setup. We fortunately make our way to the end of the film where Luciano has invited all the remaining suspects (along with the police Inspector) to a fashion show featuring Ingrid (who proves during this sequence that she can't dance or model). Here using a mask of one of the victims, the true murderer is revealed. The entire premise scenes so far out of left field that you feel like you were just manipulated by a supreme hack - sort of like the Italian version of Sean Cunningham. The biggest knock on this film is the many attempts at slapstick gratuity involving Luciano, Ingrid and a character called "Little Boffo". The film spends a record 15 minutes painfully watching them try and crack a safe. Other scenes of Leonard Mann running and hiding out in a creek next to the train tracks (as that every time one passes the entire foundation shakes) just aren't funny. And why is it that every cop in these films has to be trying either to quit smoking or be on a diet, or in this case, suffer from stomach problems? No discoveries here.



Maurizio Pradeaux's Death Carries A Cane (see page 26)

E TANTA PAURA
TOO MUCH FEAR

Director Paolo Cavara. ***Sc*** Paolo Cavara, Bernardino Zapponi. ***Mus.*** Daniele Patucchi. ***Cast*** Carrine Clery, Michele Placido, Eli Wallach, John Steiner, Tom Skerritt.

Rating ★★★

Comments Paolo Cavara's second thriller (his first was **BLACK BELLY OF THE TARANTULA**) is every bit as well done and riveting. The plot involves a wild sex party attended by several rich and influential people (along with a fair share of prostitutes). Those attending are now being stalked and killed by a (Surprise!) black gloved maniac. Into this scenario comes Inspector Lorenzo (played by Michele Placido - he went on to play an inspector in the wildly successful Italian TV series **OCTOPUS**) a by the-numbers cop, who stumbles upon clues through sheer bull-headedness - rather than the fine art of detection. He teams up with Janna (Corrine Clery from **THE STORY OF O**) a prostitute who was at the party and is now a potential victim. She tells him about a supposedly accidental death that occurred there involving an inexperienced prostitute (she at one point is made to crawl under the dinner table and give all the male guests blowjobs) who discovered a secret cache of diamonds. She was actually poisoned and as we discover near the film's conclusion, it is her father who is killing off the party goers in revenge for his daughter's death.

Director Cavara fills the motion picture (along with screenwriter Bernardo Zapponi who has also worked for Fellini, but I won't hold that against him) with offbeat incidents and characters. Every character is openly bi-sexual (much to Placido's disgust), a woman bang interrogated by Placido faints dead away for no reason, a nurse is seen bringing herself to orgasm in a silent a bathroom, making loud moaning noises and then leaving the household while her patient's son wonders what the hell that racket was. Cavara ladles on the gore and as the morbid subject matter requires, divides out dollops of nudity. Tom Skerritt would go on to star in **ALIEN** and **POLTERGEIST 2**. Daniel Pelinchi's score is superbly sleazy.

1977 LA CASA DELLA PAURA
GIRL IN ROOM 2A

Director William Rose (?) ***Scr*** William Rose ***Mus*** Berto Pisano ***Cast*** Daniela Giordano, Rel Vellone, Karin Schubert, Rosalba Neri, Brad Harris

Rating ★★☆

Comments A young girl named Edie is kidnapped off the street and taken to a country house where she is tied up and hung by her wrist from the ceiling. A long spear extends from the wall and penetrates the girl's body until she is killed. She is then thrown off a cliff to make it appear she committed suicide (what about the fact that she is not like a pin cushion?). Into the seedy scenario comes Margaret (Daniela Giordano) just released from a woman's prison. With the help of Miss Songbird (Rosalba Neri) she ends up with a room at Mrs. Grant's. It doesn't take long for her to realize that she may have been better off in prison as she meets the eccentric characters around her. Mrs. Grant believes in punishing any wrong doing to the full letter of the law while her unique-toast son comic pass for a serial killer. On top of that, she is followed around by frisky Mr. Dreese (Rel Vellone) who heads up a society of red-hooded members who carry out extreme measures against the possibly guilty parties staying at Mrs. Grant's. Into all this comes Edie's brother Jack who, along with Edie's old boyfriend Charlie (Brad Harris) end up rescuing Margaret from the cult's clutches.

The lead psychopath (the one in the red hood and pants) turns out to be Rosalba Neri. This has to be one of her strongest roles as she appears only at the very beginning and end of the picture. The end has her going over a cliff without a word of explanation as to why she was involved in these shenanigans. She is not even listed in the film's brief credit sequence. Poor Karin Schubert gets even worse treatment. She has one line of dialogue when first introduced, then later on appears as Vellone can pull her top off and cut her throat. She has more time gurgling than speaking in this laugh riot. No wonder she went on to star in porno films. She didn't have that much lower to go. Finally, I elect Berto Pisano a chase music in this film as the worst ever. It belongs in an elevator. If you look beyond the obvious sleaze, it is a truly laughable effort.

IL GATTO DAGLI OCCHI DI GIADA
WATCH ME WHEN I KILL

Director Antonio Bido ***Scr*** Vittorio Schorali, Antonio Bido, Roberto Natale, Aldo Serio ***Mus*** Trans Europa Express ***Cast*** Corrado Pani, Paola Tedesco, Paolo Maroo, Fernando Cerrilli, Giuseppe Addobbati

Rating ★★★

Comments Mara (Paola Tedesco) is a dancer wooed by Carlo (Paolo Maroo who went on to star in Lucio Fulci's **NEW YORK RIPPER** and **HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY**) because he has written a movie script for her. Going to a pharmacy for some aspirin, where a murder has just taken place, she is soon terrorized by the killer who thinks he might be recognized. Mara moves in with her boyfriend Luca (Corrado Pani) who becomes thoroughly involved in trying to figure out who the murderer is. It seems the doctor who was killed at the pharmacy was mixed up with two others, Senior Bolzi, a gnomish fellow, and Esmeralda, his mistress. When Bolzi is strangled and Esmeralda has her face stuck in the oven and then lets a hot soufflé, Luce begins to unravel the very complicated plotline. All three victims were Nazi collaborators during the war and knowingly participated in the death of a young Jewish mother and her daughter. The husband and son survived with the father thru the years repeatedly urging his son to gain revenge over the three. That son turns out to be Carlo (just one of many ludicrous coincidences to be found here). The judge disgusted by all the deaths shoots both his son and himself. An incredibly talky film. Bido does salvage the thing with his staging of the stalking sequences and brief outbursts of violence. Corrado Pani does an excellent job as the normal hero who perseveres until he uncovers the mystery. The music here, much like that for Bido's other thriller **SOLAMENTE NERO**, is definitely an attempt to ape Goblin's score from **SUSPIRIA**. It is just as effective here.

L'OCCHIO DIETRO LA PARETE
(no known English Language title)

Director Giuliano Petrelli ***Scr*** Giuliano Petrelli ***Mus*** Pippo Caruso ***Cast*** John Phillip Law, Fernando Rey, Olga Bisera, Jess Quaglio, Joseph Jenkins

Rating ★★★½

Comments A very disturbing, dank film about a serial killer (John Phillip Law) and the couple who live next door to him. The twist is that Ivano (Fernando Rey) and his wife Olga (Olga Bisera) spy on him with a series of telescopes and microphones. The couple observe not only his daily routine of push-ups, showering and dressing, but also his methods of disposing of unwanted company. On top of that, they have a butler Ottavio (Jess Quaglio) who indulges in such anti-social acts as having sex with under age girls and stealing Olga's bra and panties, hanging them on the door of his closet and stabbing the crotch with a knife. Inevitably Ivano goads Olga into developing a personal relationship with Arturo (JPL) to excite him to even greater heights of pleasure. Unfortunately he didn't bargain on their falling in love. In a shocking finale, Olga and Ivano

(who happens to be a cripple the reasons for the are explained midway in the film) follow Arture as he drives off in his car When Olga discovers to her horror that he is going to commit suicide by torching himself inside his car she rushes to aid him. She ends up perishing alongside him as the butler and Ivano watch helplessly

I couldn't help being depressed for days after watching this morbid exercise in wallowing within the depths of despair The film's environment allows one to conjure up all types of related allusions to other similar cinematic endeavors Two that come to mind are **THE SORCERERS** (Especially when Rey and Bisera are observing JPL doing pushups in the nude They both get so excited, independently each one reaches an orgasm I was reminded of the elderly couple in that British film) and **REAR WINDOW** by Hitchcock A final remark has to be made about the graphic nature of the sex scenes here Watching JPL and Olga Bisera make love near the film s finale (previously whenever Law came within an inch of a sexual encounter his reaction was to kill the other person) you get the impression these people really know how to FUCK! A more detailed review of the film is required and who the Hell is Giuliano Pesetti?



LA RAGAZZA DAL PIGIAMA GIALLO
THE PYJAMA GIRL CASE
Director Flavio Mogherini. ***Sc.*** Flavio Mogherini ***Mus:*** Riz Ortolani ***Cast*** Delia Di Lazzaro Rey Milland, Michele Placido, Mel Ferrer Howard Ross.
Rating ★★★★
Comments I reviewed this one last issue so I won't go into detail here. Milland's performance is spectacular and a tribute to his talents that he didn't just cash a paycheck and walk through it. When he mimics a character s activity with his hand (the guy was masturbating right before Milland asked to question him) and says "Have a good time" you know he s enjoying himself. The film being made in Australia (true to the origins of the story) sets the stage for a unique take on Italo-exploitation Howard Ross does his umpteenth take on being a cad while Placido is allowed to play a character rather unique for him. He s very successful in building his character s frustrations to the point of no return. Director Mogherini was another art director turned successful film director The fact that he both wrote and directed this film allows him all the credit for the film s brilliant use of parallel story lines that come to a head for a very effective finale A must see!

SETTE NOTE IN NERO
THE PSYCHIC
Director Lucio Fulci. ***Sc*** Lucio Fulci Roberto Gianviti, Dardano Sacchetti ***Mus*** Bixio-Frizzi-Tempera. ***Cast*** Jennifer O'Neill Gianni Garko, Marc Porel Gabriele Ferzetti Evelyn Stewart, Jenny Tamburi.
Rating ★★★
Comments A young girl psychically witnesses her mother's death (she jumps from a cliff and, much like the effect Fulci used in **DON'T TORTURE A DUCKLING**, her face explodes as it hits the rocky edges) Years later Victoria (Jennifer O'Neill) moves with her new husband (Gianni Garko, the star of the prolific Spaghetti Western scene, **SARTANA**) to a dilapidated villa. She continues to have visions of death and so visits a psychiatrist (Marc Porel) on a regular basis What she doesn't realize is that her latest round of visions are a preview of her own death. It seems her husband is planning on doing away with her so he can live with the family friend played by Evelyn Stewart. In a nod to Poe he walks her up at the villa (a method also used by Fulci in the aptly titled **THE BLACK CAT**) only to be undone by a watch on O'Neill that begins chiming at an inopportune time Made right before Fulci hit it big with **ZOMBIE**, the film is another excellent example of his work that depended on plot and filmmaking skill and not excessive gore to tell an interesting story

1978 **ENIGMA ROSSO**
PED RINGS OF FEAR aka TRAUMA
Director Alberto Negrin. ***Sc*** Alberto Negrin, Marcello Coscia Massimo Dallamano Franco Ferrini Stefano Ubezzie Peter Berling ***Mus*** Piz Ortolani ***Cast*** Fabio Testi Christine Kaufman, Ivan Desny Jack Taylor Helga Liné (unbilled)
Rating ★★★
Comments A 17 year old female student is found dead with the lower half of her anatomy torn open by a sharp, phallic weapon (or a dildo) Inspector Di Salvo (Fabio Testi) is given the case to solve but is told to not make waves as the girl was from a rich, influential family His investigation reveals that the girl, along with her three classmates were involved in a sex party ring. Rich businessmen would pay highly for the services. Two separate murder attempts are taking place The remaining girls are being threatened and the sleazebags behind procuring the girls is also being knocked off Testi solves both plot lines as one murderer commits

suicide while the other is stopped before successfully snuffing anyone

Note who had a hand in the screenplay: Massimo Dallamano ... he had already directed two thrillers set at a girls boarding school: **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO SOLANGE?** and **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO OUR DAUGHTERS?** so you gotta wonder if he decided enough was enough, passing the reigns on to Negrini (who would go on to make big budget Euro TV fare like **IL DULCE (SWEET)** with Bob Hoskins). Jack Taylor has a nice role as the fanatic-like owner of a clothing store who helps feel in the gaps. He meets a fitting end. The murder sequences are graphic and the shower scenes numerous but by now the concept was showing signs of wear and tear. At least Ortolani scored enthusiastically (especially the main theme)

Bob Sargent of **Videoscope Magazine** points out that Helga Liné appears in an unbilled cameo as the mother of the first victim.

SOLAMENTE NERO
ONLY BLACKNESS
Director Antonio Bido. ***Sc*** Antonio Bido, Domenico Malan, Marisa Andalo. ***Mus*** Stelvio Cipriani. ***Cast*** Lisa Capolicchio, Stefania Casini, Craig Hill, Massimo Serato.
Rating: ★★★
Comments Like Bido's other thriller **(WATCH ME WHEN I KILL)** this film is too talky however it does show an improvement in directorial technique that makes this overly long (105 minutes) Giallo well worth tracking down. The film opens with a flashback of a man dressed in blank murdering a young girl. She is seen clutching some pages out of a book: all this is important and will be revealed by film's end.

Stefano (Lino Capolicchio) of **LA CASA DALLE FINISTRE CHE RIDONO** (1976) arrives back home in Venice to see his brother's priest named Paolo (Craig Hill, who dubs his own voice). He learns about a group of people who all hate Paolo for his beliefs. They include Dr. Alulsi, who *accidentally* killed his wife while cleaning his gun. Nardi, a woman who performs abortions and Count Pedrazzi (Mario de Serato: a master at portraying decadent characters) a child molesting homosexual.

They all visit a medium and when she is killed one night in a thunderstorm, that only Paolo witnessed, he finds himself a likely candidate for becoming victim #2. Stefano meets Sandra (Stefania Casini, who was also in **SUSPIRIA**) an interior decorator also returning home to visit, we know it's a cue for the obligatory romance and nude lovemaking sequence. Meanwhile, first the Count and then the doctor are killed off in gruesome fashion. The lone survivor Nardi, has a retarded son who runs acts suspiciously like a psycho killer (where have we seen that subplot before?) so of course he's innocent. When she's found dead along with the evidence proving that Paolo killed the young girl at the beginning of the film, Stefano confronts his brother. Paolo freaks, hallucinates that he gives all of the dead communion then rushes to the top of the Church bell tower where he FALLS FROM A GREAT HEIGHT AND DIES! Unfortunately for Bido, the fussy effects people screwed up and had the *sound* of the body hitting the ground happen *before* the action takes place!

Ciprani appears to have been given precise instructions to ape Goblin's score for **SUSPIRIA** of all cues. He does a fine job but there is hardly anything creative in that. Lino Capolicchio looks like a young Horian Ellison and gives a fine performance as a man caught up in the tragic events. Bido effectively mixes gore with suspense and even pays a tribute to Val Lewton's "blue" technique of having a character walking along quietly when from out of nowhere, a loud noise and a object (in this case, an accordian player) come crashing into them. It's a cheap, but effective way of getting the audience to jump.

LA SORELLA DI URSULA
THE CURSE OF URSULA
Director Enzo Milioni. ***Sc*** Enzo Milioni. ***Mus*** Mimi Uva. ***Cast*** Barbara Magnoli, Stefania D'Amario, Anna Zinnemann, Antinisca Nemeur, Marc Porel
Rating: ★★★
Comments This is one of those ratings I have to explain. Lord knows this film stinks... but you have to admire one that features a killer who uses a rather unique weapon, his DICK! Enzo Milioni connected this perverse tale and you have to wonder what possessed him to make it. Dagmar (Stefania D'Amario) and her younger sister Ursula (Barbara Magnoli) are on vacation at a seaside resort.

Before long other tourists from their hotel (obviously female) become the victims of the Long Dong Killer. Is it Roberto, the older gentleman who enjoys backdoor action or Felipe (Marc Porel) a worthless drug addict? Surprise, it's Ursula, who actually uses a long ebony dildo to gain revenge on the women with such loose morals. It would not surprise me at all if Milioni didn't go on to work in porno as the sex scenes are definitely borderline in that direction. Much like Daniel White's score to Jesus Franco's **LOVES OF IRINA**, Mimi Uva's one note concoction will have you screaming for mercy by film's end. Speaking of which, Ursula is dispatched from a fall off her balcony. Now where have we seen that one before?



Giuseppe Berardi's Killer Reserved 9 Seats (see page 29)

1979 **GIALLO A VENEZIA**
MYSTERY IN VENICE

Director Mario Landi ***Sc*** Aldo Serio ***Mus*** Berto Pisano ***Cast*** Gianni Dei, Gabriele Tinti, Enio Girolami, Maria Angela Giordan

Rating ★★

Comments The only reason that film gets two stars is the presence of Maria Angela Giordan (**THE SECT**) and the over the top gore sequences. Very little else in this stupid film deserves merit. The film's parallel story line involves a madman serial killer and a young couple involved in twisted sex games. Fabio (Gianni Dei) can only work up the desire for his wife Flavia, if she is getting screwed by an outside party. So poor Flavia is repeatedly humiliated until she has had enough. Since the serial killer is easily apprehended you begin to feel this is the reason for him being here was to provide the film it's most spectacularly nasty death sequence involving Maria Giordan. Flavia, meanwhile decides to kill both her husband and herself. Thus ended piece of shit is a travesty of a film. Everyone in this film, except poor Flavia, makes you sick to your stomach. Even the police inspector engages in the disgusting habit of cramming hard-boiled eggs down his gullet (but why?). Berto Pisano's score sounds like it belongs in an MGM musical. Did the director arbitrarily steal it from another source and shove it in wherever he felt? This film is a turd floater of immense proportions. Don't let the ★★ rating fool you.

1980 **FOLLIA OMICIDA** aka **L'OSSESSIONE CHE UCCIDE**
UNCONSCIOUS aka FEAR aka THE WAILING

Director Riccardo Freda. ***Sc*** Riccardo Freda, Antonio Corti, Fabio Piccioni ***Mus*** Franco Mannino. ***Cast*** Stefano Patrizi, Anita Strindberg, John Richardson, Laura Gemser, Martine Brochard, Silvia Dionisio

Rating ★★★

Comments This film definitely takes the kitchen sink approach to plot elements. It features a little bit of everything from a traditional stalk and slash killer to a Mother only Norman Bates could love to Black Mass and mind control. All that plus large amounts of nudity and gore show that Freda was far from over the hill when he made this film. Michael Stanford is an actor who decides to return home and visit dear old Mom. He brings along his girlfriend Deborah (Silvia Dionisio) and invites his director friend (and lead actress Beryl (Laura Gemser) and assistant director Shirley (Martine Brochard).

Upon arriving they meet creepy Oliver (John Richardson) and of course Mother (Anita Strindberg) still looking good and proving that silicon implants do hold up over the years). Almost immediately strange things start to happen as Beryl is strangled in her bath and Deborah dreams of Black Magic rituals. When people start dying (in very graphic bloody fashion) it's made to look like Michael has gone off the deep end (he supposedly killed his father when he was younger). Michael finally discovers that his Mother and her lover Oliver were behind the murders. In fact, Oliver is so disgusted with it all he commits suicide. Deborah turns up at the end just in time to discover that Mom hooked Michael and she too is trapped and about to become the next victim.

Freda must have been in a sad mood when he made this one as no one survives to the end except Strindberg, giving the performances of her career as the Mom from Hell. Pulchritude is at an all time high in this one especially Silvia Dionisio (who looks like Olivia Newton John). The U.S. video version edits out her second dream/Black Mass sequence, either because it was chicken gets beheaded or because there's an embarrassingly fake appliqué that makes the ones in **MESA OF LOST WOMEN** look terrific by comparison. The film telegraphs its shock sequences such as when a character is seen cutting wood with a chainsaw you just know that implement will make a return appearance with far more gruesome results. Franco Mannino's score veers from grandiose orchestral themes to sleazy synthesizer beeps that ruin whatever mood he was trying to maintain.

1982 **LA CASA CON LA SCALA NEL BUIO**
A BLADE IN THE DARK

Director Lamberto Bava. ***Sc*** Dardano Sacchetti, Elisa Briganti ***Mus*** Guido & Maurizio De Angelis ***Cast*** Andrea Occhipinti, Lara Naszinski, Anny Papa, Michele Soavi, Stanko Molnar, Fabiola Toledo

Rating ★★½

Comments This film was obviously Lamberto Bava's shot at proving to Dario Argento that he could follow in his father than his father at least steps. It must have worked as Bava went on to direct the two **DEMONS** films under Argento's guidance. The film opens with a young blonde headed boy (he was called Bob in Fulci's **HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY** but I always refer to him as the pig faced kid) being dared into going down into a dark cellar. We soon learn this is a scene from a horror film that Bruno (Andrea Occhipinti) is doing the music for. It contains a clear indication of just how poor the dubbing will be on this film (Very few of the principals speak English) when we hear a chorus of "You're a female" (indicating the scared boy's lack of nerve). Bruno is renting a villa from the wealthy Tony (Future wunderkind director Michele Soavi) while he works on the score. Instantly he begins to experience weird happenings such as hearing strange voices and running into weird neighbors. He suspects people around him are being killed off but he can't ever prevail. When his girlfriend Julia (Lara Naszinski) comes to stay all hell breaks loose as she along with everyone else in the cast are murdered (in quite nasty fashion) as we (and Bruno) discover that the killer turns out to be Tony. It seems poor Tony was ridiculed as a boy about his effeminate ways causing him to adopt a female persona, Linda. He wields deer makeup and dress and murder these who reminded him of his unhappy childhood.

This film was definitely influenced by **TENEBRAE**. It even looks like it was shot on the same grounds as where John Saxe her character in that film lived. Bava uses a roaming camera and stages similar stalk and slash sequences (especially a murder that takes place in a bathroom). Occhipinti

looks like a young Tom Hanks and does a decent job as the ambiguous identifier Stanley Molnar who was at good in **MACABRO** a wasted hero as groundskeeper whose only around to be laid off near the end. The death of Julia at the end seems pointless and gratuitous. Who ever dribbed this must have had fun making up lines like "Is it possible you're a vacant nerd?")

LO SQUARTATORE DI NEW YORK
THE NEW YORK RIPPER

Director Lucio Fulci. ***Sc*** Lucio Fulci, Gianfranco Clerici, Dardano Sacchetti, Vincenzo Mannino. ***Mus*** Francesco De Masi. ***Cast*** Jack Hedley, Almanta Keller (Antonella Interlenghi), Howard Ross, Alexandra Delli Colli, Paolo Malco, Andrea Occhipinti

Rating ★

Comments I think I hate this Fulci film about as much as anything else he has done (except for his more recent "comeback" films). It's exploitation in the worst way as Fulci takes on the film aesthetics of H.G. Lewis. That Clerici and Sacchetti were involved in the script only shows how poorly Fulci executed their ideas. Obviously influenced by all the slasher swill coming from the U.S. at the time, Fulci has made a film every bit as repugnant as a **FRIDAY THE 13TH** clone. That takes no talent. Jack Hedley plays the cop in charge of the investigation and gives the only interesting performance. Alexandra Delli Colli (**ZOMBIE HOLOCAUST**) and Howard Ross are featured in the low points of their respective careers in the sex club sequence.

Have I mentioned that I hate this film? The idea of the killer using a *Donald Duck* type voice is a fucking embarrassment and does nothing more than induce a cynical audience to laugh even harder at the goings on. The murders are gruesome and nudity abundant but the film is so relentlessly hateful toward the female gender that no amount of fanboy appreciation will ever sway my opinion at it. A shame that Francesco De Masi's wonderful score appears in such a sack of shit film.



Dario Argento's ***Four Flies On Grey Velvet*** *(see page 17)*

TENEBRAE
UNSANE

Director Dario Argento. ***Sc*** Dario Argento, George Kemp. ***Mus*** Simonetti, Pignatelli. ***Narante*** ***Cast*** Anthony Francioso, Daria Nicolodi, John Saxon, Giuliano Gemma, Eva Robins/Roberta Cecchi, Mirella D'Angelo, John Steiner, Anne Parenti, Lara Wendel

Rating ★★★★

Comments My favorite of Argento's thrillers. **TENEBRAE** features all the standbys that this genre survives on. There are multiple killers (Steiner and Frasciosa) nudity and gore. Stylish photography by color expert Luciano Tovoli and a great musical score by the remnants of Goblin. Thank God the original version of this film exists on Japanese laser disc.

1983 **MURDEROCK, UCCIDE A PASSO DI DANZA**
MURDEROCK, DANCING DEATH

Director Lucio Fulci. ***Sc*** Lucio Fulci, Gianfranco Clerici, Vincenzo Mannino, Roberto Gianviti. ***Mus*** Keith Emerson. ***Cast*** Olga Karlatos, Ray Lovelock, Claudio Cassinelli, Cosimo Cinieri, Al Cliver

Rating ★★★

Comments People always take pot shots at this film because of the opening breakdancing (remember that useless fad?) sequence. Considering that it never occurs again that's a dishonest approach to take when reviewing this film. Actually it's a better than average thriller that showcases Fulci to his best advantage. Ambitions are being held at the Arts For Living Center where dancers are trying to get one of three parts in a musical show. Dick (Claudio Cassinelli, who is dubbed by the prolific Edmund Purdom) the owner at the training and Candice (Olga Karlatos, who had her eye poked out in Fulci's **ZOMBIE**) are responsible for choosing the finalist. When the best dancer of the group, Susan, has her heart punctured by a long needle, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that someone wants the job so bad they're willing to kill for it. Onto the scene comes Inspector Borges (I wish I knew who this actor was - he's perfect for the role) a world weary detective who has the single best line at dialogue in the film. When he is confronted by a punk kid who's obviously not the killer he describes him thusly "He's not a psycho - he's an asshole."

Candice is haunted by dreams featuring a handsome man trying to kill her. When she discover he's actually a model named George Welsh (Ray Lovelock, who never ages) she ends up meeting him and falling in love. More dancers are being killed and the evidence points to George. By film's end we discover that the killer was actually Candice who was jealous of her attendants opportunity to be the big time. She framed George as the killer because ten years ago, just when she was about to star on Broadway, she was run over by a motorcycle driven by of George. She ends up committing suicide when her plan is discovered. The method of murder used by the killer here while not graphically gory is sure to make you flinch as that long needle is slowly pushed through the victim's chest cavity.

Look for a cameo by Al Cliver as a police vence specialist and Fulci as Phil, an agent friend at Karlatos.



Sergio Bergonzelli's Faiza Of The Flesh (see page 11)

MYSTERE
DAGGER EYES
Director Carlo Vanzina ***Sc*** Carlo Vanzina, Enrico Vanzina. ***Mus*** Armando Trovajoli. ***Cast*** Carole Bouquet, Dalila Del Prete, John Steiner, Gabriele Tinti, Janet Agren

Rating ★★½

Comments My memory of this film was pretty favorable so it came as a shock when I rewatched it for this article and realized my first impression was dead wrong. The big problem is that Carlo Vanzina (son of Stefano Vanzina, aka Steno) has made a cook tossing thriller. It's obvious Vanzina isn't at all comfortable with the sleazy surroundings so he avoids allowing the lasciviousness to get down and dirty. This is the type of film (the erotic thriller) that is all the rage these days in Hollywood. What they don't realize is that Italy was doing it 20 years ago - on a lot less money with much better results. Mystere (Carol Bouquet, who honest to God looks like Vampira in this one) is a high priced call girl, who has the unfortunate luck of becoming involved in assassination and blackmail. She has ended up with a cigarette lighter that contains film showing who the assassin is. The killer, played by John Steiner, fails at several attempts to regain the lighter. By this time Mystere is being protected by Colt, (Philip Cecchetto) a cop who looks more at home on the cover of Esquire magazine than catching a murderer. Not helping matters is Colt's boss (played by Del Prete) who is involved with Steiner and is also murdering anyone who might reveal their identity. Colt and Mystere teamup (and repeatedly double cross each other) and escape with the million bucks Steiner has paid for the negatives. Even though they eventually kill Steiner (Son-of-a-bitch! It's the old fake dummy falling from a high building trick) it ends with his assistant getting ready to finish the job. The main star of this film is the costume designer as more thought is put into Bouquet's wardrobe than the script. Vanzina wastes talents like Janet Agren (as a fellow hooker) and Gabriele Tinti (as a pimp with a heart of gold) and refuses to do more than let the proceedings trend toward exploitation before switching to something more comfortable. Armando Trovajoli is a composer that usually scares films with elevator music, but here does everything he can to get this film going. Too bad he's let down by Vanzina at every turn.

THRAUMA
Director Gianni Martucci ***Sc*** Gianni Martucci, Alessandro Capone, Renny Russo ***Mus.*** Ubaldo Continello ***Cast*** Renny Russo(a), Roberto Posse, Timothy Wood, Franco Diogene

Rating ★★☆

Comments Here's an obscure one for you. It stars no one famous (although tub-of-lard Franco Diogenes is also in **NUDE PER L'ASSASSINO**) and was directed by Gianni Martucci, who teamed up as boss on a film often mis-credited to Lucio Fulci, **RED MONKS** made in the late 70's.

After surviving the horrid disco beat playing over the opening credits we are introduced to an ugly guy playing with a set of building blocks down in a dank cellar. A diverse group of people are spending the weekend at the home of Carla (Roberto Posse) and Silva. They includes a photographer and his model who decide to branch off from the rest to enable Paul to take some nude shots of Olga. After words Olga is left by her self and is attacked by the madman seen at the film's opening. In a bit of perversity, after killing her with a machete, this sicko is seen making love to her dead corpse! Andrea (Renny Russo) is a sleazebag who tries to rape his girlfriend (cut because with death all around them, she isn't in the mood! More deaths by machete occur before we discover that the killer is Andreas brother, and he is using them to kill off the guests so he can say he pulled off the perfect crime. It ends with Andreas uttering just that as he approaches Lili with machete in hand and the film freeze frames. Quickly paced at 74 minutes, you just have to believe the film is missing a reel somewhere. Ineptly made (in one scene you can see the microphone at the top of the frame), the film at least possesses exploitation

staples and so nudity and gore. The last 15 minutes has the killer stalking Lili, and there's not a lot of suspense generated as everyone moves so damn slow. As sleazy as it is, maybe that's not enough; perhaps the film deserves its obscurity.

1985 **L'ASSASSINO E ANCORA TRA NOI**
(no known English Language title)

Director: Camillo Teti ***Sc:*** Ernesto Gastaldi, Camillo Teti ***Mus:*** Detto Mariano. ***Cast:*** Mariangela D'Abbraccio, Giovanni Visentin, Riccardo Perrotti, Luigi Mezzanotte, Yvonne D'Abbraccio.

Rating: ★★½

Comments: If this film had any kind of an interesting middle section to go along with the opening and especially the disturbing conclusion, it would have rated much higher. It is based on a true story (see the review of **MONSTER OF FLORENCE**) about a killer who guns down lovemaking couples in the woods. This version centers around a police woman in charge of the investigation (Mariangela D'Abbraccio). The middle portion chilly portrays her personal and professional life to the point of tedium. The last ten minutes of this film are so wild and out of place that it's worth hanging around for. The woman attends a seance where she experiences the killer brutally slaughtering a couple as they make love in a tent (oddly, this is the way **MONSTER OF FLORENCE [IL MOSTRO DI FIRENZE]** begins). The gore content here is very disturbing as we see the killer carve the nipples off the female victim and even worse, cut out the girl's genital at. It's done in an agonizingly slow manner which makes it all the more realistic. The film ends with the policewoman running off to meet her boy friend at a theater playing the film **L'ASSASSINO E ANCORA TRA NOI!** A very strange film indeed.

IL MOSTRO DI FIRENZE
THE MONSTER OF FLORENCE

Director: Cesare Ferrario. ***Sc:*** Cesare Ferrario, Bruno Nolis. ***Mus:*** Paolo Rustichelli. ***Cast:*** Leonard Mann, Helena Giovanni, Gabriella Tinti, Francesca Muzio, Federico Pacifici.

Rating: ★★

Comments: A couple is seen about to get it on in a tent, in the middle of the woods when a man appears in a heavy coat. He blasts the woman with a 45 and gives chase to her boyfriend, has a quick slit of the throat and some more rounds fired to help finish off the victim. This activity has been going on once a year for the past 16 years. Andreas (Leonard Mann, who must live a clean life as he hasn't aged much in the twenty years he's been making films in Italy) a journalist, and his girl friend Julia (Bettina Giannini) began an investigation into who the killer is and why it's been occurring. The problem with this debut film by Cesare Ferrario (and what got him into hot water when this film debuted) is that he based on a true story without an ending. The killer has never been caught and so his attempt at providing an ending along with a reason behind the killings is spotty at best. Ferrario's pedestrian answer to the events involve a man who, as a young boy, witnessed his Mom and Dad in a ménage-a-trois. This event apparently so warped his mind that any type of illicit sexual play brings on a killing rage.

Yawn, wasn't that the plot to umpteen slasher films made here in the eighties? While there are a few breasts and drops of blood, the pace is likened to a Movie-of-the-Week affair. Second generation composer Paolo Rustichelli (Carlo's son) creates a morose and solemn mood with a small sized string orchestra. Gabriele Tinti has a blink and you'll miss it cameo as newspaperman.

SEVEN HYDEN PARK: LA CASA MALEDETTA
FORMULA FOR A MURDER

Director: Martin Herbert (Alberto De Martino). ***Sc:*** Alberto De Martino, Hank Walker. ***Mus:*** Francesco De Masi. ***Cast:*** Christina Nagy, David Warbeck, Carroll Blumenberg, Rossana Brazzi.

Rating: ★★★

Comments: Christina Nagy was attacked (and raped) by a psychopath (posing as a priest) as a child, resulting in her being both crippled and frigid. Into her life comes David Warbeck, a kind and loving physical therapist. In no time at all they marry, much to the disgust of Nagy's personal secretary, Carroll Blumenberg (who is in love with Nagy). Of course all of this plot detail that we receive initially turns out to be a sham. Blumenberg and Warbeck are actually lovers and they are attempting to drive Nagy to suicide (Warbeck dresses up as a priest and terrorizes Christina). The twist in all this is that Warbeck is so crazy that he kills off Blumenberg in a frenzy and during the final 30 minutes, several bloody bodies resembles Jack Nicholson's character from **THE SHINING**. It's a marvelous over the-top performance that is ruined by the fact that Warbeck does nothing to look like Nicholson. For shame to whoever decided to re-use parts of Francesco De Masi's score from **THE NEW YORK RIPPER**.

SOTTO IL VESTITO NIENTE
NOTHING UNDERNEATH

Director: Carlo Vanzina. ***Sc:*** Carlo Vanzina, Enrico Vanzina, Franco Ferrini. ***Mus:*** Pino Donaggio. ***Cast:*** Tom Schanley, Renee Simonsen, Nicole Perrine, Maria McDonald, Donald Pleasance.

Rating: ★★★

Comments: Compared to Vanzina's **MYSTERE [DAGGER EYES]** this film represents a quantum leap in quality. This time out, he revels in sleaze and doesn't shy away from the much needed exploitive elements presented by the script. Since scriptwriter Ferrini was involved in Dario Argento's **PHENOMENA**, you have to wonder if he contributed the ESP subplot to this film. The movie opens at beautiful Yellowstone National Park where Bob, a park ranger, experiences a psychic flash from his teen sister Jessica, who is living in Milan as a model. He feels she is in great danger and so high tails it to Italy. Once there, he confronts her and in goes to the police. The inspector (Donald Pleasance in a marvelous parker mance) has no evidence of foul play and so Bob is on his own trying to discover what happened to her sister. He soon learns that she was invited to a sleazy party where one of her model friends was

killed playing Russian Roulette. She, along with all the other participants at the party was paid off in diamonds to keep her mouth shut. Now all those girls are being killed off by someone who uses a pair of scissors. When it begins to appear that Jessica may be alive and behind the murders, Bob gets disgusted and heads for the airport back home. However before he gets there he discovers the killer is Barbara (Renee Simonsen). Jessica's lesbian lover, who was afraid she was about to lose her and was disgusted with their lifestyle. Barbara has also killed Jessica and nailed her body to a chair but carries on around her like she is still alive. When her secret is discovered by Bob and the Inspector, she, along with the lifeless body of Jessica, plunge out of the highrise apartment to her death.

Fortunately we are spared the sight of another fake-looking dummy being flung to the ground. In fact, Vanzina stages the final scene as a tribute to Argento's **4 FLIES ON GREY VELVET**, complete with slow motion and Music by Donaggio that apes Morricone's score for that film. A superlative effort by Vanzina who unfortunately went the route of Pupi Avati towards respectability.

1986 **NORIRAI A MEZZANOTTE**
YOU'LL DIE AT MIDNIGHT

Director: Lamberto Bava. ***Sc:*** John Old Jr. (Lamberto Bava) Dardano Sacchetti. ***Alus:*** Claudio Simonetti. ***Cast:*** Valeria D'Obici, Leonardo Treviglio, Lea Martino, Eliana Hoppe, Paolo Marco, Lara Wendel.

Rating: ★★★

Comments: Lamberto Bava continues to get a raw deal in the ten press for his TV movies (of which this is one). It is true that **THE OGRE** and **GRAVEYARD DISTURBANCE** aren't exactly masterpieces but they and especially this film, put 90 % of the horror TV movies in this country to shame. Nicole (who is a cop) and his rich/bitch wife are fighting again only this time, she turns up dead (killed, once again in a shower with an icepick thrust through the curtain and into her torso). Nicole (Leonardo Treviglio) is the prime suspect and one of his co-workers Inspector Pierro Terzi (Paolo Marco) is assigned to the case. Anne (Valeria D'Obici) is a criminal psychiatrist who is a friend of both men. She refuses to believe that Nicole is guilty instead, she postulates that the killer is really Tribbe, a madman supposedly killed several years ago in a hospital fire where she worked. Even after Nicole is killed (he was involved in a scuffle with Anne) the murders continue, lending credence to Anne's theories. Terzi's daughter Carol (Lea Martino) is threatened by the killer and as she and two school friends head to an abandoned hotel for safety. I think we can see where this is heading. The killer follows the girls and after killing off but Carol. Paolo arrives in time to blow the murderer away. Sure enough, it was Anne who was dressing up as Tribbe, complete with mask, to kill off members of the cast. Why you ask? It seems she was raped by Tribbe when working at the hospital and this act drove her to madness.

While Bava and Sacchetti have brought nothing new to the game with their script, it is Bava's camera placement and technique (along with yet another excellent score by Simonetti) that save the day. The last third of the film owes a lot to Sergio Martino's **TORSO** when the three girls isolate themselves at the abandoned hotel. It slackens the pace unbearably as we wait for the killer to stalk his victim. Bava casts the crucial part of Anne with an androgynous actress that helps to sell the fact that she dresses as a man whenever the act of murder occurs. Look for Lamberto in a swift cameo as the police photographer who appears in the background at the scene of the first murder.

1987 **AQUARIUS** aka **DELIRIA**
STAGEFRIGHT

Director: Michele Soavi. ***Sc:*** Lew Cooper (Luigi Montefiori) ***Alus:*** Simon Boswell. ***Cast:*** Barbara Cupisti, David Brandon, Don Forte, Robert Gligorov, John Morghen (Giovanni Lombardo Radice).

Rating: ★★★½

Comments: Peter (David Brandon) is the director of a Slasher Musical (now thats a novel concept!). He has the bad luck of having a barnacled maniac escape from a nearby psychiatric clinic and make his way into the theater where the play rehearsal is taking place. Being the typical megalomaniacal director he decides to capitalize on the escape and work it into the story line, not realizing, until it is too late that the killer has indeed taken over the lead.

Everyone knows this is Soavi's debut directorial credit, which came about due to Joe D'Amato. It certainly follows the lead of the U.S. slasher films made in the early eighties but Director Soavi pulls out all the stops to make the usual cliches more enjoyable. John Morghen gives a delightful performance as Brett who is mistaken as the killer and killed by his director (a thought that has no doubt crossed Soavi's mind at times). Barbara Cupisti (who looks like Margot Kidder) as Alicia, gives a strong performance and indicates he may become the George Cukar of the Italian horror genre (It's a joke!).

ARABELLA L'ANGELO NERO
ANGELA, THE BLACK ANGEL

Director: Max Steel (Stelvio Massi). ***Sc:*** R. Filippucci. ***Mus:*** Serfran. ***Cast:*** Tini Cansino, Valentina Visconti, Francesco Casale, Carla Mucari, Evelyn Stewart.

Rating: ★★★

Comments: Here's a sexy, sleazy thriller that absolutely gets down into the filth and wallows around like a pro. No wonder Stelvio Massi uses a pseudonym here as it's like no other film he's made. You have to think the presence of Betty Page imitator Tini Cansino inspired the direction of this one. Here's a woman who deserves to be seen absolutely nude. She plays a sexpot wife to Francesco, who was crippled on their wedding day because Tini was giving him a blow job while he was driving their car and ended up having an accident. He's obviously been bitter about it ever since and so takes every opportunity to remind her of it. She in

turn seeks sexual pleasure from every Tom Dick (oops) and Harry she meets. This includes a vice cop who busts her during a raid on a sex club (the activities are revealed during the wonderfully perverted opening credits). When he, along with private eye who is spying on Carolina, are knifed to death, a lesbian Police Inspector (Valentina Viscontí) is assigned the case. Just to muddy the waters it is revealed that she is the daughter of a convicted killer and suffers from dreams that involve being stabbed in the crotch with a pair of scissors. The only person who appears to be normal is Francesca's mom (played by Evelyn Stewart) as of course she is revealed to be the killer. It seems she was tired of watching Carolina fuck around on her son. In a twisted finale, she accidentally kills Francesca (who was leaving Tini in the park), thinking him a male prostitute. Sex and violence are on display here in all its glory. When one of the victims is killed we see one of the policeman walking around with a bloody handkerchief which contains the poor man's penis. A nasty exercise in exploitation.



Lorenza Emole's ***Death Walks In High Heels*** *(see page 18)*

CAMPING DEL TERRORE
BODY COUNT
Director Ruggero Deodato ***Sc*** Alex Capone, David Parker, Sheila Goldberg, Luca D'Alisera. ***Mus*** Claudio Simonetti. ***Cast*** Bruce Penhall, Mimsy Farmer, David Hess, John Steiner, Ivan Rassimov, Charles Napier

Rating ★★★

Comments. For writers and viewers who think Deodato should spend the rest of his life making Cannibal Films this one will be an instant turnoff. For those with a more open outlook on life, **BODY COUNT** fits all the films Deodato made after **CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST** reveals a sure directorial hand in charge of a genre vilified by most. This is a slasher film for those of us who hate them. Unlike many thrillers covered here **BODY COUNT** truly has its origins in the eighties. It contains the trappings of the genre such as a group of obnoxious teens an isolated location in the woods, promiscuous activity with ample nudity, POV camera angles that trick us into thinking we're about to witness a murder (but don't) and gore. Fortunately the scriptwriters also give us a parallel story line involving adults dealing with love and betrayal. It is this activity that sets the film apart.

The adult actors are all top-notched veterans of Euro and USA exploitation. Mimsy Farmer (who does not receive any billing) and David Hess are a married couple who long ago quit loving each other while local con Charles Napier is Farmer's true love. Their affair actually causes Mimsy and Hess to go crazy and kill off the teens who wandered into the area by mistake. Two other Euro-vets John Steiner as a doctor and Ivan Rassimov as Napier's partner may have small roles but it's good to see them in anything the late in the eyes. I would kill to have Claudio Simonetti's score on tape, record or CD.

CARAMELLE DA UNO SCONOSCIUTO
SWEETS FOR A STRANGER
Director Franco Ferrini. ***Sc.*** Franco Ferrini, Andrea Giuseppini. ***Mus*** Umberto Smaila. ***Cast*** Barbara De Rossi, Marina Suma, Athina Cenci, Mara Venier, Laura Betti

Rating ★½

Comments Director Ferrini has scripted many projects for Dario Argento (**CHURCH, OPERA, PHENOMENA** and **2 EVIL EYES**) so I had rather high hopes for his directorial debut. As you can see from the above rating he certainly fell short of the mark. The film a plot centers around a group of prostitutes who find themselves the victims of a killer who brandishes a straight razor. Where the film begs down is Ferrini's detailing the minutia of their daily lives. His bid for respectability requires him to focus on the non explosive factors such as where they eat, what they wear and discussion groups centering on the travails of being a 'working' woman. An admirable approach but for fans of these films, IT'S THE WHONG FUCKING ONE! The film's central character is Elena (Barbara De Rossi) who discovers the killer is his the young daughter of one of the prostitutes. The finale featuring her being unmasked with razor in hand and wearing a ballerina tutu is pretty silly. Laura Betti makes an appearance as a very down-on-her-luck, drunken whore and for those who remember her from **BAY OF BLOOD**, it's a depressing sight. Certainly not recommended.

LE FOTO DI GIOIA
PHOTO OF GIOIA
Director Lamberto Bava. ***Sc*** Gianfranco Clerici, Daniele Stoppa. ***Mus*** Simon Boswell. ***Cast*** Serena Grandi, Dana Nicolello, Vanni Corbellini, David Brandon, Capucine, George Eastman (Luigi Montefiori)

Rating ★★½

Comments Serena Grandi (the *Dolly Parton* of Italy) stars as Gioia, a model for **Pussycat**, a skin magazine. Several of her co-workers are murdered and she is sent photos of their dead bodies, posed in front

at a huge picture of her. The plot is simplicity itself as we are introduced to all the surrounding suspects such as her director Dennis (Vanni Corbellini) her ex flame Alex (George Eastman) and main photographer Robert (David Brandon). Much like **TOO BEAUTIFUL TO DIE** made the following year, it is her director that is wiping out her friends.

A great cast is wasted here, especially Daria Nicolodi and the late Capucine (who committed suicide soon after this film). They are little more than extended cameos. The fact that Grandi bustsize is as extensive makes it hard (for me at least) to concentrate on anything else. Bava's direction of this film is quite stylish (and he winks at himself with a nod to **DEMONI**) but has a severely fat down with the by the-numbers script. One nice twist is that when we see the victim from the killer's POV we truly get the sense that a warped personality is at work. Not only do we get the slicked colored gel effect, but the victim may have a huge eye or a head like a fly (a nod to Cronenberg no doubt). Claudio Simonetti's frantic score is also a big plus. Instead of just plugging in the latest Heavy Metal shit (a la Argento) Simonetti is allowed to build the stalk and slash sequences to a peak of momentum.

OPERA
TERROR AT THE OPERA
Director Dario Argento ***Sc*** Dario Argento, Franco Farini ***Mus.*** Claudio Simonetti ***Cast*** Cristina Marsillach, Ian Charleson, Urbano Barberini, Antonella Vitale, Barbara Cupisti, Daria Nicolodi
Rating ★★★½
Comments Another one that is saved to death by Marsillach's bran opera starlet who is being terrorized by the usual black gloved killer. Who in turn is revealed to be a cop, played by Barberini. The gunshot through the peephole/eyeball death of Nicolodi stands up as a true gruesome effect, no matter how many times I've seen it.

1988 **PATHOS-SEGRETA INQUIETUDINE**
OBSESSION-A TASTE FOR FEAR
Director Piccio Raffanini ***Sc*** Lidia Ravera, Piccio Raffanini ***Mus*** Gabriele Ducros ***Cast:*** Virginia Hey, Gerard Darmon, Ciola Scala, Carlo Mucari, Dario Parisini, Eva Grimaldi, Kid Creole
Rating ★★★★
Comments Giallo-**BLADERUNNER** style. A marvelous film that I could watch repeatedly and never tire of. Along with **DEATH LAID AN EGG** this is the best film on the list and the one to see. It is a true winner in the style-over content parade. Although it doesn't call attention to itself the film is set in a not too distant future where drugs and bisexuality are the norm. Diane (Virginia Hey from **MAD MAX 2**) is a photographer who though difficult to work with is considered the best. She is always striving for the offbeat and weird which includes her pick of models and what they wear. Her choice of Teagan (a muscled up androgynous woman who looks like Stallone with tits) eventually leads to murder when the model is killed during a bondage tape sent to Diane. The opening credits read, "To the one I love." A cop who is a walking cliche named Arnold is assigned the case and he takes an instant dislike for Diane and her entire lifestyle (but that doesn't stop her from trying to get him into bed). Diane's ex-husband produces bondage tapes and is the most likely suspect (meaning of course he is innocent). When Teagan's roommate Kim (a big, beautiful black woman who is as bald as Telly Savalas) is murdered and taped George (Diane's ex) is able to use his sophisticated equipment to reveal the murderer to be Diane's assistant, Paul. It seems that he was (here we go again) disgusted by her lifestyle and so killed off those who he saw as threats to her purity (something she probably lost around 13 years of age).

With all the hoopla going on these days about **BASIC INSTINCT**, here is a film that if given a wide release and any amount of publicity would have special interest groups shilling blood. This is a film that needs to be played with the volume turned way up as the score by Ducros is a sonic delight (and thank you Robert Lewis for the audio assists). The SciFi droppings are just that, but certainly help to put across that feeling of off centeredness. When Diane and Kim go to a gay nightclub looking for a friend of Teagan's, you'll think you've entered a Rankorexic Camila (and damn it there aren't drawings of that character by Liberatore on the curtains). Look for Eva Grimaldi in a wordless cameo as one of George's toys/models.

SOTTO IL VESTITO NIENTE 2
TOO BEAUTIFUL TO DIE
Director Dario Di Piana, ***Sc.*** Dario Di Piana, Claudio Mancini, Achille Manzotti ***Mus*** Roberto Cacciapaglia ***Cast*** Florence Guerin, Francois Eric Gendron, Randi Ingerman, Giola Maria Scala, Carl Mucari, Dario Parisini
Rating ★★½
Comments A group of models are invited to a party at the home of a rich pervert. One of the models, Sylvia, refuses to become involved in the sexual hijinks and abruptly leaves. Three hours later she is found dead in a car crash a few miles from the party. A further investigation reveals a bullet through her skull. A music video director named David had big plans for Sylvia and as new is forced to find a new leading lady. He spots Melanie (Florence Guerin) at the local disco and auditions her successfully for the part. Meanwhile, the three other models who were at the party with Sylvia along with their pimp/manager Alex, are being killed off in a most gruesome manner.

The motion picture rushes to its climax as we discover that Melanie is Sylvia's sister thus making us wonder if she is the murderer, getting revenge for her sister's death. It ends with David being revealed as an insane megalomaniac who claims to be God. Thus when he discovered that Sylvia had been corrupted he killed her and thus responsible for her fall from Heaven. One of the more successful thrillers from this less time frame, Kaos-venus Piana has studied the camera techniques of Brian De Palma. He steady cam's your brains out by allowing the camera to float across time and

space. Piana started out as a costume designer and like his American contemporary Joel Schumacher (**FLATLINERS**), knows how to make a film reflect a stylish sensibility. Unlike other contemporary attempts in this genre **TOO BEAUTIFUL TO DIE** doesn't forget the ingredients of sex and violence. Florence Guerin is one of the most beautiful actresses now working in Italy and wonder at wonders, she can even act. For an even more eye opening performance catch her in **THE CLICK**, based on the Milo Manara comic of the same name. The music by Ceccaroglia rips off **PSYCHO** for the umpteenth time.

1989 **UN GATTO NEL CERVELLO**
NIGHTMARE CONCERT aka A CAT IN THE BRAIN

Director Lucio Fulci. ***Sc*** Lucio Fulci, John Fitzsimons, Antonio Tentori. ***Mus*** Fabio Frizzi. ***Cast*** Lucio Fulci, Jeffrey Kennedy, J.L.Thompson, Harrison Lang, Rita Simon

Rating ★

Comments While the film is fun to laugh at, it represents the most callous attitude to its intended audience I've ever seen. Fulci's usual editor Vincenzo Tomassi, had to work miracles to get this crazy quilt of a film to mesh. It is basically a simple tale about a horror film director named and played by Lucio Fulci, who thinks he's going mad. He has hallucinations involving gore scenes from his movies while murders are taking place all around him. The murders are actually performed by a psychiatrist, who was driven insane by his philandering wife. He has hypnotized Fulci into thinking he is performing the murders. The police discover who the real killer is and put a bullet through the good doctor's brain (Fulci's comment on the profession?). The "nightmare" sequences are all from other horror films and are dripping with cheesy gore. In the proud tradition of Ed Wood, Fulci inaccessfully matches footage of the killer in this film with the one that appears in the others. Frizzi's score is recycled from the films of Fulci's heyday (**THE BEYOND** and others) just to remind us how far he's sunk. Most of the original footage for the film consists of Fulci walking around or driving his car. A pathetic fucking film and one that seriously impairs further appreciation of what's left of Fulci's talent.

LA MORTE E DI MODA
(no known English Language title)

Director Joe Brenner (Bruno Gaburro) ***Sc*** Luciano Appignani ***Mus*** Filippo Trocco. ***Cast*** Anthony Francisca, Miles O'Keefe, Teresa Leopardi, Marina Giulia Cavalli, Timothy Brent (Giancarlo Prete)

Rating ★

Comments Gloria works as a model and one night, during a thunderstorm, she has car trouble. She finds an old house where she hopes to be able to call for help. Inside she witnesses an act of murder that causes her to faint and temporarily lose her memory of the incident (no doubt due to the fact that she was hit by a truck). Her doctor recommends she see her lover, a psychiatrist named Marco (Miles O'Keefe), to help recover her memory. Meanwhile she is being terrorized by the proverbial black gloved assassin, nattily attired with ski mask to match. Much time is spent with Gloria and the principals returning to the old house in repeated attempts to pry loose her recollection. At the end she recalls seeing a murder, however it took place over twenty years ago. The killer naturally wants to wipe out her being able to implicate him (he turns out to be the boss of her modeling agency) and so attempts to finish her task to the bones. The Inspector (Tony Francisca) and Marco show up in time to save Gloria while the killer reveals where he hid the dead body (E. A. Poe's **The Black Cat** should be a clue).

LAME is the word to describe this TV movie-type concoction. Director Bruno Gaburro may be trying to return to the good ol' days when Italian thrillers were king, but he misses the mark high and wide. When you spend endless minutes watching Anthony Francisca fish (and lecture us on how to cast your line), you'll question why you're even watching this turkey. Exploitation requirements (ie, Blood and Breasts) are pitifully low (why do all models have to have eyebrows you could plant corn in?) so even that's no reason to suffer through this boring mess.

1991 **OMICIDIO A LUCI BLU**
HOMICIDE IN BLUE LIGHT

Director Al Bradley (Al Bressia) ***Sc*** Al Bressia, Stefanie Curti & Gianluca Sacconi. ***Cast*** Florence Guerin, David Hess, Brian Peterson, Joseph Mark Wendy Whindham, Rick Battaglia.

Rating ★★

Comments Unfortunately for fans of this genre, Al Bressia's still making films within it, if he can't make a decent film with Florence Guerin and David Hess, the man is truly hopeless. I think it's safe to say that of Al won't be interviewed within the pages of ETC especially if he were to ever send this issue. The film takes its plot from **KLUTE**, with Guerin playing the Jane Fonda role as the hooker/model and David Hess in the Donald Sutherland part as the cop. The victims this time are johns for a change, and at the scene of each crime in between the dead man's legs a grenade is found. It just so happens that Guerin's current flame is an ex-marine named Ted. Hmmm. To catch the killer, Hess disguises himself as Guerin (which isn't be crazy an idea as you might think as Florence has apparently been putting away the groceries these past few years) and discovers that the killer is indeed Ted. It seems he was castrated while serving in Vietnam by a stray grenade and is taking out his obvious frustrations on the NYC male population.

There are numerous episodes of Guerin acting out her clientele's sexual fantasies, but it's all pretty bland stuff. Nothing much here to get excited about, but then this IS an Al Bradley film. What's ya expect?

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